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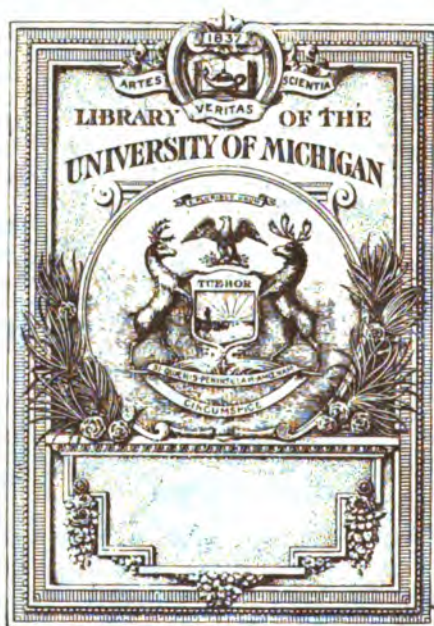
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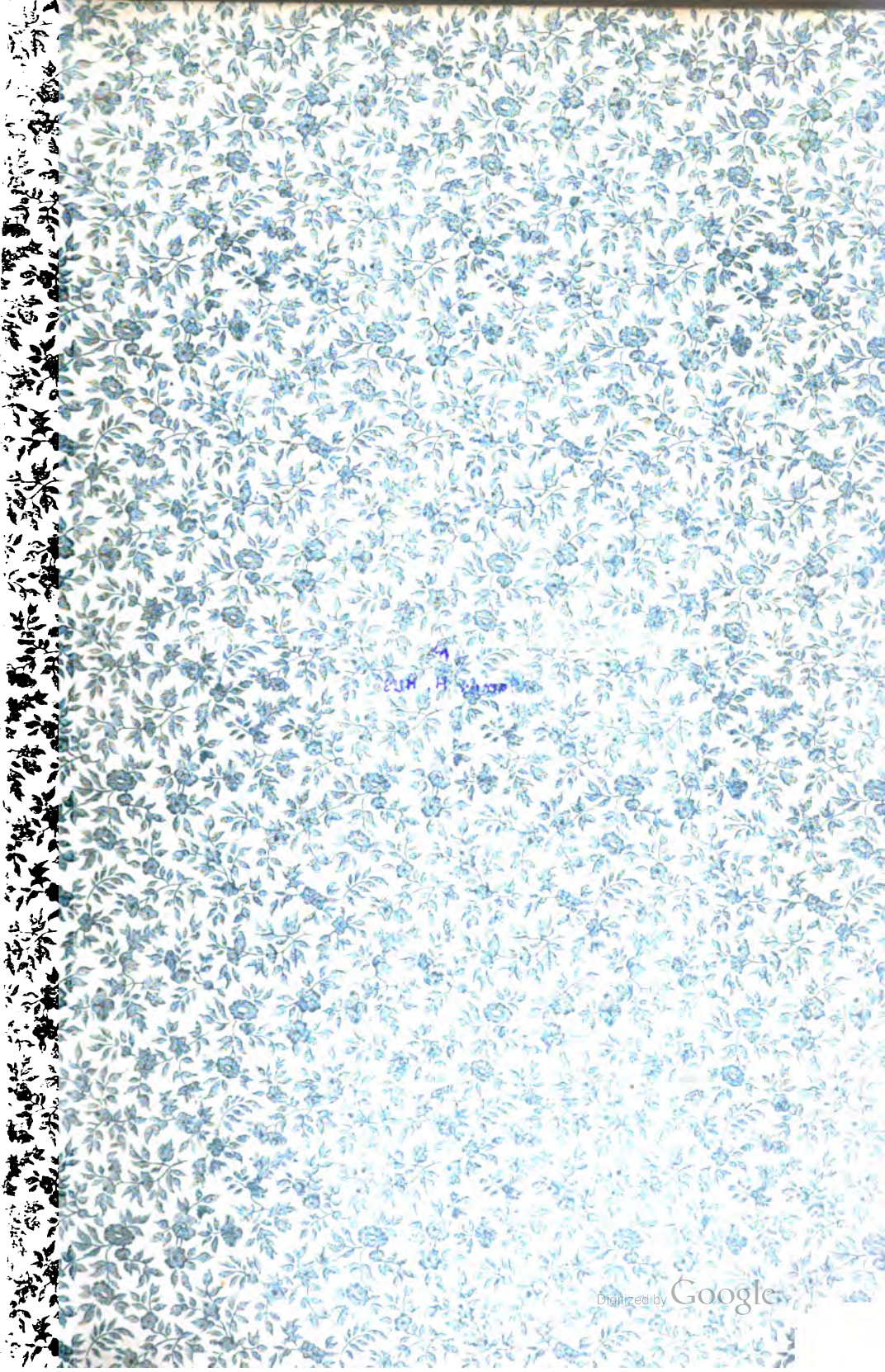
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CONGRESS
OF
1891
OF
THE
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Paris, 1891



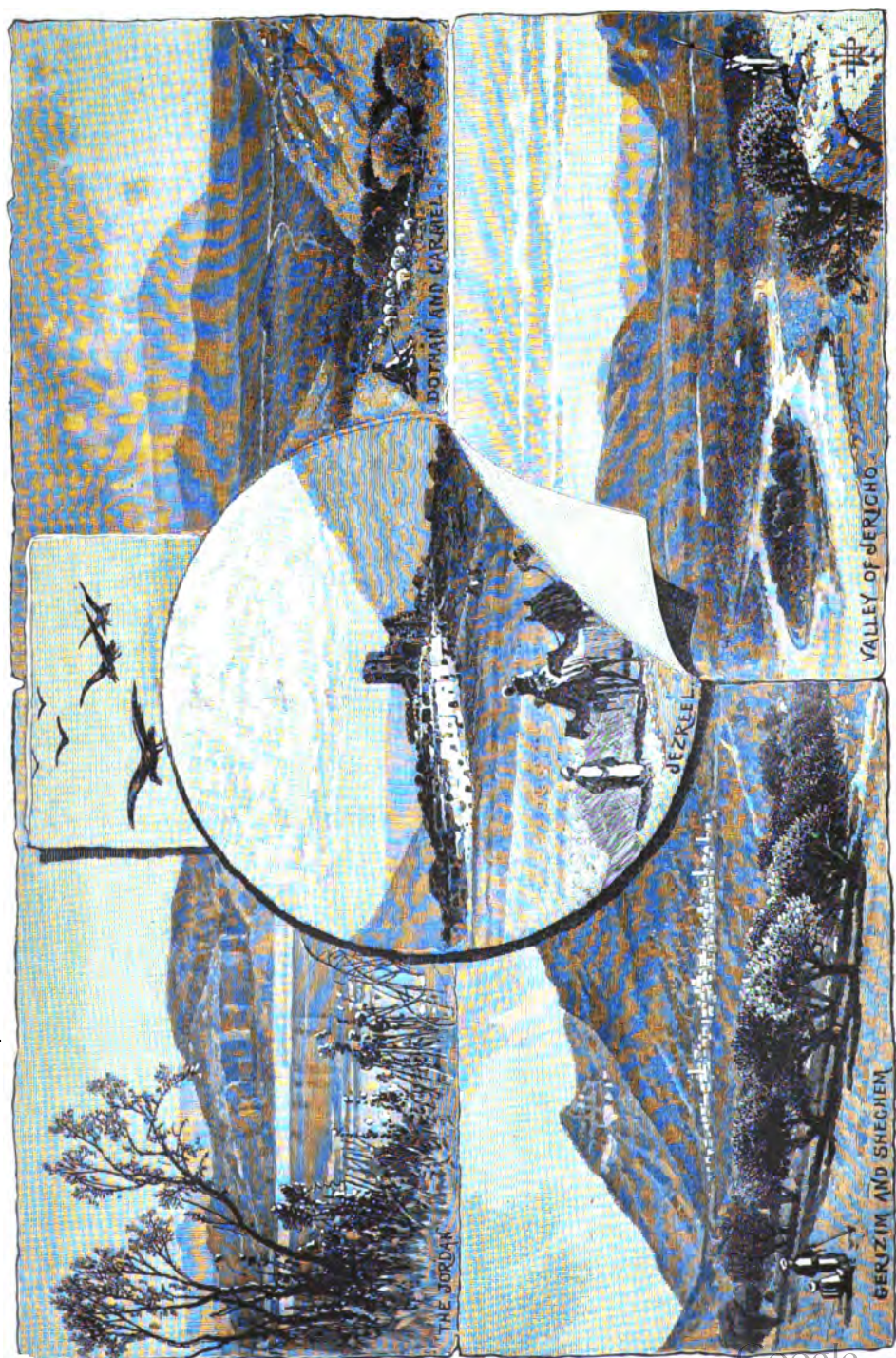
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STUDIES CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES

A GUIDE TO THE STUDY

OF THE

SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1891



INCLUDING ORIGINAL AND SELECTED EXPOSITIONS, PLANS OF
INSTRUCTION, ILLUSTRATIVE ANECDOTES, PRACTICAL
APPLICATIONS, ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES,
LIBRARY REFERENCES, MAPS,
PICTURES, DIAGRAMS

BY

JESSE L. HURLBUT, D.D.

AND

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BRADLEY & WOODRUFF

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1890



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PREFACE.

THE Sunday-school is one of the great social forces of our time. Every week of the year it brings together in America alone nearly ten millions of people, many of whom are children and youth in the formative period of life, and others men and women of character to control the rising generation. The constituency of the Sunday-school is one sixth of our population, and it is an element which influences the other five sixths. The investigator in politics and social science must be short-sighted who fails to take into account these ten million Bible students in his estimate of the elements which enter into our national life.

The Sunday-school differs from all other schools in that it employs but one text-book. Visit every class of every department in the Sunday-school and you find therein one book studied, and one only—the Bible. The Sunday-school as an institution exists for the purpose of teaching the word of God to young and old. And in the Sunday-school of to-day there is one unique feature: all the schools in the land—with exceptions so few as not to deserve notice—use the same selections of Scripture on the same Sunday. The adoption of the Uniform Lessons, which began in 1873, was a great step, not only toward Christian unity, but toward efficiency and thoroughness in the study of the Bible. More eyes than ever before have been turned upon the sacred page; more Bibles have been circulated; more and better expositions have been prepared and published, and even the Bible world itself has been investigated as never before to throw its light upon the interpretation of Scripture. As a result, there is a more general and more intelligent faith than the history of the Church can throw in the past. The generation which feeds upon the sincere milk of the word will surely grow to strength and completeness of Christian character.

With the Uniform Lessons came a necessity for improved lesson helps. It is idle to recommend teachers and scholars to study the text

PREFACE.

of the Bible alone, "without note or comment." To do this is to ignore all that scholars in past ages have learned and all that students of the present age are learning. The wise teacher will lay every department of knowledge under tribute that he may the better interpret the mind of the Spirit in the written word. Let him study thoroughly his lesson from his own Bible; but let him also have as good a commentary as he can obtain, and make diligent use of it. And since but few teachers can enjoy the advantages of a library, with its varied expositors, a commentary such as ours, containing gems from many mines, the best thoughts of the best thinkers, will always have a place.

This book is a growth, a development. In 1872 appeared a thin volume of 102 pages, "THE LESSON COMPEND, by two Bible students." Their names do not appear on the title, but they are now known and honored as Bishop John H. Vincent, LL.D., and President George H. Whitney, D.D. Year by year the "Compend" grew, and in 1880 it became "THE LESSON COMMENTARY," enlarged both in size and in scope. Many Bible students have aided in its preparation, and the authorities quoted in its annual volumes would constitute a large library. Another advance is made in the present volume, indicated by its new title, "AN ILLUSTRATIVE COMMENTARY ON THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS." Somewhat less space is given to details of exposition, which may be found in every lesson help, and much more to bright thoughts, illustrative anecdotes, and plans of instruction. The largest share of the actual work in the preparation of this volume has been done by the Assistant Editor in the lesson department, Mr. ROBERT R. DOHERTY, Ph.D., who has made the compilation of authorities and written the expositions and the practical thoughts for teachers. The Illustrations, a new department, have been gathered by the Rev. WILLIAM A. DICKSON. The Rev. Dr. A. D. VAIL has prepared the Library References. The Editor has written the Teaching Hints.

We commend this volume to every teacher of the Sunday-school lessons and to every lover of God's word, praying that by the influence of the Holy Spirit it may prove an aid to their work of interpreting and imparting the truth of God.

JESSE L. HURLBUT.

NEW YORK, May 30, 1890.

LESSONS AND GOLDEN TEXTS FOR 1891.

STUDIES CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

First Quarter.

Lesson

- I. Jan. 4.—THE KINGDOM DIVIDED. 1 Kings 12. 1-17. *Commit vs. 12-14.* GOLDEN TEXT: Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Prov. 16. 18.
- II. Jan. 11.—IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL. 1 Kings 12. 25-33. *Commit vs. 28-30.* GOLDEN TEXT: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Exod. 20. 4.
- III. Jan. 18.—GOD'S CARE OF ELIJAH. 1 Kings 17. 1-16. *Commit vs. 2-5.* GOLDEN TEXT: They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. Psa. 34. 10.
- IV. Jan. 25.—ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL. 1 Kings 18. 25-39. *Commit vs. 38, 39.* GOLDEN TEXT: How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him. 1 Kings 18. 21.
- V. Feb. 1.—ELIJAH AT HOREB. 1 Kings 19. 1-18. *Commit vs. 9, 10.* GOLDEN TEXT: Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee. Gen. 26. 24.
- VI. Feb. 8.—AHAB'S COVETOUSNESS. 1 Kings 21. 1-16. *Commit vs. 15, 16.* GOLDEN TEXT: Take heed, and beware of covetousness. Luke 12. 15.
- VII. Feb. 15.—ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN. 2 Kings 2. 1-11. *Commit vs. 9-11.* GOLDEN TEXT: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. Gen. 5. 24.
- VIII. Feb. 22.—ELIJAH'S SUCCESSOR. 2 Kings 2. 12-22. *Commit vs. 12-14.* GOLDEN TEXT: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4. 6.
- IX. March 1.—THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON. 2 Kings 4. 25-37. *Commit vs. 32-34.* GOLDEN TEXT: The Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them. John 5. 21.
- X. March 8.—NAAMAN HEALED. 2 Kings 5. 1-14. *Commit vs. 13, 14.* GOLDEN TEXT: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. Psa. 103. 2.
- XI. March 15.—GEHAZI PUNISHED. 2 Kings 5. 15-27. *Commit vs. 25-27.* GOLDEN TEXT: Be sure your sin will find you out. Num. 32. 23.
- XII. March 22.—ELISHA'S DEFENDERS. 2 Kings 6. 8-18. *Commit vs. 15-17.* GOLDEN TEXT: Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. 2 Kings 6. 16.
- XIII. March 29.—REVIEW; or, Temperance Lesson, Isa. 5. 11-63; or, Missionary Lesson, Isa. 11. 1-10.

Second Quarter.

Lesson

- I. April 5.—SAVED FROM FAMINE. 2 Kings 7. 1-16. *Commit vs. 8, 9.* GOLDEN TEXT: O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Psa. 107. 8.
- II. April 12.—THE GOOD AND EVIL IN JERU. 2 Kings 10. 18-31. *Commit vs. 28-29.* GOLDEN TEXT: Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. 1 Sam. 16. 7.
- III. April 19.—JONAH SENT TO NINEVEH. Jonah 1. 1-17. *Commit vs. 14-16.* GOLDEN TEXT: Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. Jonah 3. 2.
- IV. April 26.—NINEVEH BROUGHT TO REPENTANCE. Jonah 3. 1-10. *Commit vs. 9, 10.* GOLDEN TEXT: The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. Luke 11. 32.
- V. May 3.—ISRAEL OFTEN REPROVED. Amos 4. 4-13. *Commit vs. 6-8.* GOLDEN TEXT: He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Prov. 29. 1.
- VI. May 10.—ISRAEL'S OVERTHROW FORETOLD. Amos 8. 1-14. *Commit vs. 11, 12.* GOLDEN TEXT: Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. Luke 8. 18.
- VII. May 17.—SIN THE CAUSE OF SORROW. Hos. 10. 1-15. *Commit vs. 12, 13.* GOLDEN TEXT: Your iniquities have separated between you and your God. Isa. 59. 2.
- VIII. May 24.—CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL. 2 Kings 17. 6-18. *Commit vs. 16-18.* GOLDEN TEXT: Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you. 2 Chron. 24. 20.
- IX. May 31.—THE TEMPLE REPAIRED. 2 Chron. 24. 4-14. *Commit vs. 8-10.* GOLDEN TEXT: God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9. 7.
- X. June 7.—HEZEKIAH THE GOOD KING. 2 Chron. 29. 1-11. *Commit vs. 10, 11.* GOLDEN TEXT: Them that honor me I will honor. 1 Sam. 2. 30.
- XI. June 14.—THE BOOK OF THE LAW FOUND. 2 Chron. 34. 14-28. *Commit vs. 14-16.* GOLDEN TEXT: The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. Psa. 119. 72.
- XII. June 21.—CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH. 2 Kings 25. 1-18. *Commit vs. 4-6.* GOLDEN TEXT: Come, and let us return unto the Lord. Hos. 6. 1.
- XIII. June 28.—REVIEW; or, Temperance Lesson, Isa. 23. 1-18; or, Missionary Lesson, Isa. 60. 1-12.

LESSONS AND GOLDEN TEXTS FOR 1891.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Third Quarter.

Lesson

- I. July 5.—THE WORD MADE FLESH. John 1. 1-18. *Committ* vs. 11-13. GOLDEN TEXT: The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. John 1. 14.
- II. July 12.—CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES. John 1. 20-42. *Committ* vs. 40-42. GOLDEN TEXT: Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! John 1. 29.
- III. July 19.—CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE. John 2. 1-11. *Committ* vs. 1-5. GOLDEN TEXT: This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory. John 2. 11.
- IV. July 26.—CHRIST AND NICODEMUS. John 3. 1-17. *Committ* vs. 14-17. GOLDEN TEXT: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3. 16.
- V. Aug. 2.—CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL. John 4. 5-26. *Committ* vs. 13, 14. GOLDEN TEXT: Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Rev. 22. 17.
- VI. Aug. 9.—CHRIST'S AUTHORITY. John 5. 17-30. *Committ* vs. 24-27. GOLDEN TEXT: All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Matt. 28. 18.
- VII. Aug. 16.—THE FIVE THOUSAND FED. John 6. 1-14. *Committ* vs. 11-13. GOLDEN TEXT: I am the bread of life. John 6. 48.
- VIII. Aug. 23.—CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE. John 6. 26-40. *Committ* vs. 33-35. GOLDEN TEXT: Lord, evermore give us this bread. John 6. 34.
- IX. Aug. 30.—CHRIST AT THE FEAST. John 7. 31-44. *Committ* vs. 31-33. GOLDEN TEXT: If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. John 7. 37.
- X. Sept. 6.—THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD. John 8. 31-47. *Committ* vs. 33-36. GOLDEN TEXT: As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God. John 1. 12.
- XI. Sept. 13.—CHRIST AND THE BLIND MAN. John 9. 1-11 and 35-38. *Committ* vs. 35-38. GOLDEN TEXT: One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. John 9. 25.
- XII. Sept. 20.—CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD. John 10. 1-16. *Committ* vs. 14-16. GOLDEN TEXT: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Psa. 23. 1.
- XIII. Sept. 27.—REVIEW; or, Temperance Lesson, Prov. 4. 13-19, or, Missionary Lesson, Acts 10. 25-35.

8

Fourth Quarter.

Lesson

- I. Oct. 4.—CHRIST RAISING LAZARUS. John 11. 21-44. *Committ* vs. 43, 44. GOLDEN TEXT: Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. John 11. 25.
- II. Oct. 11.—CHRIST FORETELLING HIS DEATH. John 12. 20-36. *Committ* vs. 35, 36. GOLDEN TEXT: And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. John 12. 32.
- III. Oct. 18.—WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET. John 13. 1-17. *Committ* vs. 15-17. GOLDEN TEXT: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Phil. 2. 5.
- IV. Oct. 25.—CHRIST COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES. John 14. 1-3 and 15-27. *Committ* vs. 1-3. GOLDEN TEXT: I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever. John 14. 16.
- V. Nov. 1.—CHRIST THE TRUE VINE. John 15. 1-16. *Committ* vs. 4, 5. GOLDEN TEXT: Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. John 15. 8.
- VI. Nov. 8.—THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. John 16. 1-15. *Committ* vs. 13, 14. GOLDEN TEXT: He will guide you into all truth. John 16. 13.
- VII. Nov. 15.—CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES. John 17. 1-19. *Committ* vs. 17-19. GOLDEN TEXT: He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Heb. 7. 25.
- VIII. Nov. 22.—CHRIST BETRAYED. John 18. 1-13. *Committ* vs. 4-6. GOLDEN TEXT: The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Mark 14. 41.
- IX. Nov. 29.—CHRIST BEFORE PILATE. John 19. 1-16. *Committ* vs. 5-7. GOLDEN TEXT: Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. Rom. 4. 25.
- X. Dec. 6.—CHRIST CRUCIFIED. John 19. 17-30. *Committ* vs. 17-19. GOLDEN TEXT: For Christ also hath once suffered for our sins. 1 Pet. 3. 18.
- XI. Dec. 13.—CHRIST RISEN. John 20. 1-18. *Committ* vs. 14-16. GOLDEN TEXT: It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again. Rom. 8. 34.
- XII. Dec. 20.—THE RISEN CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES. John 21. 1-14. *Committ* vs. 12-14. GOLDEN TEXT: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Col. 3. 1.
- XIII. Dec. 27.—REVIEW; or, lesson to be selected by the school.

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- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
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10

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Meyer. The Holy Scriptures.
The Speaker's Commentary.
The Cambridge Bible.
Keil and Bertheau on Kings and Chronicles.
Eichorn. The Hebrew Prophets,
Ewald. The Prophets of the Old Covenant.
Keil. Biblical Commentary on the Minor Prophets.
Hengstenberg. Christology of the Old Testament.
Pusey. The Minor Prophets.
Cowles. The Minor Prophets.

II. DICTIONARIES.

Herzog, Smith, Kitto, McClintock & Strong, Abbott.

III. HISTORICAL WORKS.

- Bunsen.* Egypt's Place in Universal History. 4 vols.
Rawlinson. Religion of the Assyrians.
Boscawen. The Religion of Babylonia.
Pinnock. The Bible and Contemporary History. 2 vols.
Dawson. Egypt and Syria, their Physical Features in Relation to Bible History.
Maurice. Prophets and Kings.
Greene's Kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
Ewald. History of Israel.
Rawlinson. Historical Evidences, and also Historical Illustrations.
Stanley's Jewish Church.
Kitto. Bible Illustrations.
Rawlinson. Ancient Monarchies.
Blunt's Scriptural Coincidences.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

IV. BIBLICAL ARCHÆOLOGY AND TRAVEL.

Keil. Manual of Biblical Archæology, concerning Sacrifice, Worship, Social Relations, Acts of Worship, etc. 2 vols.

Sayce. Fresh Light from Ancient Monuments.

Bissell. Biblical Antiquities. A Hand-book.

Conder. Stone Lore of Syria.

Sayce. Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of Ancient Babylon.

Porter. Giant Cities of Bashan.

Barclay. Recovery of Jerusalem.

Stanley. Sinai and Palestine.

McGregor. The Rob Roy on the Jordan.

Layard. Discoveries in Nineveh.

Fergusson. Palaces of Nineveh Restored.

Smith. Recent Assyrian Discoveries.

Newman. Thrones and Palaces of Babylon and Nineveh.

Robinson's Physical Geography of Palestine.

Van Lennep's Bible Lands.

Roberts's Oriental Illustrations.

Tristram's Natural History of the Bible.

V. INTERPRETATIONS OF SCRIPTURE IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN DISCOVERY.

Geikie. Hours with the Bible.

Rawlinson's Modern Skepticism.

Tuck. Hand-book of Biblical Difficulties.

Things not Generally Known.

VI. MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

Wilkinson. Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, Including their Religion. 8 vols.

Burden. Oriental Customs.

Tristram. The Land of Israel.

Dollinger's Jew and Gentile.

Also *Thomson, Geikie, Edersheim, Schürer, Freeman, Tuck*, etc., quoted under authorities on St. John.

VII. LIVES OF ELIJAH.

William M. Taylor, Krummacher, Edersheim, Macduff, Lowrie.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

ON ST. JOHN.

For the greater part the references are to the general literature on the whole New Testament. We refer to the books that seem best to us. Several of them are equally useful in the study of the other gospels.

I. COMMENTARIES.

(1.) TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GERMAN.

Bengel, Olshausen, Meyer, Tholuck, Hengstenberg, Stier.

(2.) ENGLISH AUTHORITIES.

Ellicott. "Handy Commentary," written by H. W. Watkins, D.D. This volume has very great value.

Alford. Brief, critical, sound, and careful.

Wordsworth. Reverent, patristic, but unequal.

Westcott in "Speaker's Commentary," thorough and valuable.

Maurice. Discourses on the Gospel of St. John. Very suggestive, but not always safe.

Expositions of the Gospel of St. John. 8 vols. A useful, popular commentary.

The Cambridge Bible.

(3.) AMERICAN AUTHORITIES.

Macdonald. The Life and Writings of St. John. The best single volume on the subject.

Lyman Abbott. Very able and suggestive.

Whedon. Brilliant, bold, vigorous.

Curry. Edition of *Adam Clarke*. Sound, careful, scholarly.

Schaff. "Popular Commentary." Good for general use.

Jacobus. Scholarly, clear.

Barnes. Homiletical, useful.

II. LIVES OF CHRIST.

Of the many lives of Christ each one has some special merit. But judging by many tests we arrange them in the following order :

Ederheim. 2 vols. The most valuable contribution to the subject for a generation. A great work in every way.

Andrews. A most vivid condensed presentation of the living Christ, with a most careful study of the events and of alleged discrepancies, but not of a popular character.

Geikie. A vivid, realistic, interesting book to read.

Farrar. A wonderfully brilliant and vigorous presentation of the scenes, events, and people. Not always accurate, but charming and popular.

Neander. Scholarly and philosophic, leading the way in the new style of writing Christ's life.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

Hardwicks. "Christ and Other Masters." A fine style, showing Christ's life and work by contrast with the best human teachers.

Of some of the more recent and less elaborate lives of Christ we notice the following:

Boardman, *Stalker*, and *Volling*, the last two dwelling largely on "the divine Man."

III. JEWISH LIFE AND PEOPLE.

Ederheim. "Sketches of Jewish Social Life." Very useful and instructive. A mine of valuable material.

Ederheim. "The Temple and Its Services." The very best book on the subject, and full of information.

Schürer. "Jewish People of the Time of Christ." A most remarkable work. 3 vols. Much new and valuable light from Jewish sources.

Freeman. "Bible Manners and Customs." A splendid hand-book on the subject.

"Biblical Things not Generally Known." A compilation from many sources. Valuable.

Eggleston. "Christ in Literature," giving the studies of the great masters.

IV. EXPLORATIONS AND TRAVELS IN PALESTINE.

Dr. Thomson. "The Land and the Book." 2 vols. The best general description of the Land, showing how it proves the truthfulness of the Book. A new and expensive edition in three volumes, splendidly illustrated, with much new material.

Geikie. "The Holy Land and the Bible." A new and useful work, written on the spot, and similar to Thomson's.

Stapfer. "Palestine in the Time of Christ." A new and most valuable work.

Stanley. "Sinai and Palestine." Full of charming descriptions and historical groupings. Very suggestive.

Conder. "Tent Life in Palestine," giving valuable results of recent surveys and explorations in Palestine.

Porter. "Hand-book of Syria and Palestine." Used by Murray as a guide-book for travelers through the Holy Land.

V. FOR A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE GREEK.

Westcott and Hort. "The New Testament in the Original Greek." Acknowledged by scholars as the best edition of the simple Greek Text. Dr. Schaff has edited a volume with this text on one page and the Revised Version on the next.

Alford. "Greek Testament." The best work of the kind that has also an English commentary on the text.

Vincent, M. R. "Word Studies." A work of very great worth, giving the English reader who knows little or nothing of Greek a knowledge of the treasures of meaning in single words. It fills a real want.

Thayer. "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament." By far the best work of the kind.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

Trench. "New Testament Synonyms." Very able, and often most suggestive and useful.

Greek and English Harmonies.

Strong. "Greek Harmony of the Gospels."

Robinson. "Harmony of the Gospels."

VI. PECULIARITIES OF JOHN AS A WRITER.

Gregory. "Why Four Gospels?"

Jukes. "The Four Gospels."

Westcott. "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels."

VII. GLEANINGS FROM MANY SOURCES ON ST. JOHN.

Ford. "The Gospel of St. John Illustrated," from ancient and modern authors.

Butler. "The Bible Reader's Commentary." Selected from over two hundred writers.

Tuck. "Hand-book of Biblical Difficulties." The solution given by the great authorities of all schools of thought.

VIII. EXPOSITIONS OF SPECIAL SUBJECTS.

The Expositor. First Series, 13 vols. Second Series, 8 vols. Third Series, 8 vols. The best results of ancient and modern biblical learning in a comprehensive, popular, and attractive form.

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The Biblical Treasury. 9 vols. A great amount of learning and investigation in a cheap, popular form with a large amount of illustrative material.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Studies Concerning the Kingdom of Israel are to occupy our time as Sunday-school teachers and students during the first six months of the year 1891. These studies have been selected; six from First Kings, ten from Second Kings, three from Second Chronicles, two from the Prophecy of Jonah, two from the Prophecy of Amos, and one from the Prophecy of Hosea, with four optional temperance or missionary lessons, all of which have been selected from the Prophecy of Isaiah. The books from which the lessons have been thus selected are in themselves peculiarly interesting to Bible students. The books of Kings were so called from their being a record of the kings of Israel and Judah, and form a direct continuation of the books of Samuel, giving the history of the Hebrew monarchy down to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The division into the two books was first made by the Jewish clerks who turned their Bible into the Greek language (the Septuagint) and the two parts were originally called the Third and Fourth books of Kingdoms of Kings. The books of Samuel formed the first and second. This division of their work into two parts is altogether needless, arbitrary, and very awkward, as will be especially seen in the division between First and Second Kings. It is impossible to decide the question of their authorship; Jeremiah, Ezra, and Barak have been conjectured; but the authorship of Kings, like that of many other Old Testament books, must forever remain uncertain. The ultimate source was doubtless the public official annals of the two kingdoms as prepared by the scribes and recorders and kept as national archives. The Chronicles also, in the ancient Hebrew, were one undivided work, and, like Kings, were divided by the Septuagint translators. The work is much later than that of Kings, and was written after the return from Babylon. Ezra may have been the author, though that is not certain. Whoever it was seems to have used carefully a large amount of contemporaneous literature, much of which is now lost. The first book has a peculiar value because of its thoroughly national and idiomatic character. The four books of prophecy from which selections have been made in these lessons were all contemporaneous with the book of Kings. The characteristics of their works are sufficiently alluded to in the introductions to the several lessons.

The following is a synopsis of the history of the two Israelitish kingdoms. It will be found of service by the student. It, as well as much of the preceding paragraphs, has been condensed from Dr. Terry's scholarly commentary on the Kings and Chronicles, and from Bishop Hurst's admirable Outline of Bible History.

1. **Rehoboam**, son and successor of Solomon, was forty-one years old on his accession to the throne, B. C. 975. The people demanded redress for their grievances, and, being refused, ten tribes revolted and made Jeroboam king. Two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, remained faithful to Rehoboam, who became king of Judah. Judah still worshiped the true God at Jerusalem, but Jeroboam made two golden calves for Israel, one in Beth-el and the other in Dan. The kingdom of Israel lasted two hundred and fifty-four years (B. C. 975-721), and that of Judah three hundred and eighty-seven years, B. C. 588. Israel had nineteen kings and Judah twenty, counting Athaliah.

2. **Hostility between the Two Kingdoms. Idolatry in Israel.**—Sheshem rebuilt by Jeroboam, and made the capital of Israel. Constant hostilities prevailed between the rival kingdoms. Rehoboam fortified his kingdom. The true servants of God in Israel left the country, because of the growing idolatry, and went to Judah. Rehoboam and his subjects now fell into idolatry and other grievous sins. Jerusalem surrendered to Shishak, King of Egypt, at the head of a great army of Libyans, Nubians, and Ethiopians, and the temple and Solomon's palace were despoiled, B. C. 970.

3. **Abijah, Assa, and Kings of Brief Reign; Ahab.**—Death of Rehoboam, B. C. 957, succeeded by his son Abijah, who made a desperate attempt to recover the Ten Tribes, and defeated the forces of Jeroboam in the mountain range of Ephraim with great loss. Abijah died after a

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

reign of three years; succeeded by his son Aza, B. C. 955. Aza's reign distinguished by the removal of idols and a general religious reform, the fortification of frontier towns, the defeat of Zera the Ethiopian at the head of a great army, a solemn covenant with God to put to death all who proved unfaithful to him, the hostility of Baasha, King of Israel, and a league with Ben-hadad, King of Syria, against Baasha.

Jeroboam's successor was his son Nadab, a wicked prince, who was killed at the siege of Gibbethon by Baasha. Baasha had risen from the ranks; he usurped the throne, and destroyed the whole family of Nadab.

Baasha died and was succeeded (B. C. 930) by his son Elah, who was barely on the throne before being assassinated by Zimri, one of his captains. Zimri's brief reign of seven days was terminated by Omri, Elah's chief captain; he attacked Zimri at Tirzah. Zimri fired his palace and perished in the flames. Omri succeeded him, and lived the former part of his reign in Tirzah and the latter part in Samaria, a city built by himself as a capital for his kingdom. Ahab, his son, succeeded him. These Israelitish kings were all gross idolaters. Ahab's wife was the cruel and wicked Jezebel.

4. **Jehoshaphat.**—Aza, after a long reign, succeeded by Jehoshaphat, his son. Jehoshaphat garrisoned his fenced cities, pulled down the heathen altars and groves, instructed the people in the law, defeated the Philistines and Arabians, who became tributary to him, united with Ahab in an unsuccessful war against the Syrians, and combined with Joram and the king of Edom in a victorious war against the Moabites.

5. **The Prophet Elijah.**—During Ahab's reign a great famine occurred, owing to a drought which lasted three years and a half. Elijah foretold to Ahab the famine, and then fled to the brook Cherith, where he was supported some time by ravens. He then went to Zerephath, where he lodged with a poor widow, and miraculously supplied her barrel with meal and her cruse with oil, and restored her child to life. Great triumph of the worship of Jehovah on Mount Carmel, in a contest between Elijah and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. The prophets of Baal slain by the people at the command of Elijah. Abundant rain in answer to Elijah's prayer. The prophet then withdrew to Beer-sheba, and thence to Horeb, and anointed Elisha his successor as prophet.

6. **War with the Assyrians. The Prophet Elisha.**—Samaria besieged by Ben-hadad, King of Syria, B. C. 901. Ahab, King of Israel, successful over him. Israel again invaded, but the Syrians were defeated with great slaughter at Aphek. Ahab and Jehoshaphat in war with the Syrians a few years later; Ahab killed, and succeeded by his son Ahaziah, who died B. C. 897. Elijah was translated to heaven in a chariot of fire, and Elisha took his place as prophet. Elisha healed an impure spring at Jericho by casting in salt; multiplied the widow's oil; restored to life the son of a wealthy Shunammite woman; rendered a pottage of poisonous gourds fit for food by pouring in meal; multiplied twenty barley loaves and some roasted corn for one hundred men; caused an iron ax to float on the water; directed Naaman, the leprous captain of the Syrian army, to bathe seven times in the Jordan, and Naaman was healed thereby.

7. **Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, Joash, Monarchs of Judah.**—Jehoshaphat was succeeded by Jehoram, his wicked son, who began his reign by murdering all his brethren. His son Ahaziah, was also a bad monarch and an idolater. He was slain by the Israelitish usurper, Jehu, and succeeded by Athaliah, his mother, who sought to destroy all the seed royal. Joash, however, Ahaziah's son, was preserved by the family of Jehoiada, the priest, who in time overcame all opposition and placed the young prince on the throne. Joash served the true God during the life-time of this good priest, but afterward became an idolater. Zechariah, the prophet, son of Jehoiada, was stoned to death for reproving him.

8. **Ahaziah, Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Kings of Israel.**—Ahaziah, King of Israel, was succeeded by his brother Joram, who was dangerously wounded in battle against Hazael, King of Syria. Jehu slew Joram, and succeeded him as king of Israel. Jehu died B. C. 855; his son and successor, Jehoahaz, was wicked, and fell under the power of Hazael, who compelled him to limit his army to fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand infantry. His reign inglorious; followed by Jehoash, who, with his people, remained in idolatry. Jehoash three times victorious over the Syrians; defeated Amaziah, King of Judah, in battle; dismantled the northern wall of Jerusalem, and carried off the sacred treasures. Jehoash succeeded by Jeroboam II.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

9. The Prophet Jonah.—Jonah was commissioned, perhaps about B. C. 850 or a little later, to go to Nineveh, the capital of the great empire of Assyria, and foretell its destruction. Shrinking from the task, he took ship for Tarshish; but a great storm arising, he was cast overboard. A great fish swallowed him, and after three days cast him up on dry land. Again commanded to go to Nineveh, he no longer refused, and declared the destruction of that city in forty days. The people sincerely repenting, the city was spared for more than another century.

10. Amaziah, Uzziah, and other Kings.—Joash slain by his servants; succeeded by his son Amaziah, a bad man. Amaziah slain, B. C. 810, and succeeded by his son Uzziah, who reigned fifty-two years, and was a wise, good, and successful king. Being elevated beyond measure by his successes, he one day entered the holy place in the temple to offer incense on the golden altar, and was stricken with leprosy. His son Jotham was appointed regent, and succeeded him on the throne. Jeroboam II., of Israel, son of the wicked Jehoash, reigned forty-one years; he died B. C. 783, after which there was an *interregnum* of eleven years. Zachariah, son of Jeroboam II., became king of Israel; he reigned six months, and was assassinated by Shallum, who reigned but one month, and was deposed by Menahem. Menahem succeeded by his son Pekahiah, who was slain by Pekah. Isaiah began to prophesy. Jotham, King of Judah, succeeded by Ahaz, the most wicked of all the kings of Judah. Judah invaded by Pekah, in alliance with Rezin, King of Damascus, B. C. 742. The intended alliance of Ahaz with Assyria denounced by Isaiah, who predicted the ruin of Damascus and the Ten Tribes.

11. Captivity of the Ten Tribes.—Ahaz defeated by Pekah; one hundred and twenty thousand soldiers slain, and two hundred thousand women and children led into captivity. Ahaz, by giving the temple treasures, secured the aid of Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, who now slew the king of Syria, took possession of his dominions, ravaged the east Jordan country, and carried into captivity Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh. Pekah, King of Israel, succeeded by his son Hoshea. Samaria besieged by Shalmaneser, successor of Tiglath-pileser. Sargon, who revolted against Shalmaneser, continued the siege, and Samaria was captured, B. C. 710. The Ten Tribes were carried into captivity, and Israel as an independent monarchy ceased to exist.

12. Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz.—Hezekiah had succeeded Ahaz as king of Judah, B. C. 726. He was a good and just king, put away the idolatrous objects of his people; persuaded the people to renew their vows to God. Sennacherib, Sargon's successor, invaded the country, first, B. C. 713, and again B. C. 711. The second time his army was miraculously destroyed. Hezekiah was dangerously ill, and his death was predicted by Isaiah. Hezekiah prayed for the prolongation of his life, and fifteen years were added to it. Death of Hezekiah, B. C. 698; succeeded by his son Manasseh, who restored idolatry. Jerusalem invested by the captains of Ezer-baddon; Manasseh taken captive to Babylon and thrown into prison. He was afterward restored to his throne, and was thenceforth a good ruler. Manasseh died B. C. 642, and was succeeded by his son Amon. Amon slain by his servants, and his son Josiah, who was only eight years old, succeeded him, and became one of the purest and wisest kings of Judah. In accordance with a prophecy uttered before King Jerobam I., more than three hundred years previously, Josiah suppressed idolatry, renewed the covenant with God, and celebrated the passover with imposing grandeur. He was defeated and slain in his attempt to resist the passage of Necho, King of Egypt, through his dominions on the way to obtain possession of Charchemish, which commanded the passage of the Euphrates. He was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz; the latter reigned but three months, and was succeeded by Jehoikim. The seventy years' captivity predicted by Jeremiah.

13. Captures of Jerusalem.—Jerusalem captured by Nebuchadnezzar, B. C. 606. Jehoikim put in chains, but afterward restored to the throne; the temple rifled; Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (the names of the latter three changed in Babylon to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego) taken to Babylon. Jehoikim revolted against Nebuchadnezzar; died a violent death, B. C. 598; was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, or Jeconiah, who reigned but three months. Jerusalem again taken by Nebuchadnezzar; he made Zedekiah, the youngest son of Josiah, king over the country. Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, B. C. 593, and the latter besieged Jerusalem again. Jeremiah twice imprisoned in Jerusalem for prophesying the fall of the city.

Capture of Jerusalem, B. C. 588. Zedekiah was led captive to Babylon; Jeremiah liberated; the temple burned; the city nearly razed; the most of the people led off into captivity.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

The lessons for the last six months of the year 1891 are Studies in the Gospel of John, and are therefore, in a very true sense, biographical sketches of Jesus. Of necessity they differ widely from the lessons in the Gospel of St. Luke studied last year. Luke was conscientiously a historian. Under the guiding spirit of God he collated from various sources the incidents which he wrote into his narrative. John, on the contrary, was one of the earliest of the disciples of Jesus, and tells his story not at all as a historian, but as a chronicler and eye-witness. Besides, John's nature was peculiarly philosophical and spiritual. The pictorial quality so characteristic of Mark and the other evangelists is not so noticeable in John's writings. For him the words of his Master have even more value than his works. He has less picturesque power of vision than the other disciples, but a far profounder insight. Before the most cursory study of the life of Christ according to St. John is engaged upon, the student should have carefully in mind the leading characteristics of John's Gospel. The following paragraphs have been condensed mainly from the excellent Commentary, one of the Cambridge series, written by the Rev. Dr. Plummer.

1. **A Spiritual Gospel.**—From the time of Clement of Alexandria (A. D. 190) this Gospel has been distinguished as a "SPIRITUAL GOSPEL." The Synoptists give us mainly the external acts of Jesus Christ; St. John lays before us glimpses of the inner life and spirit of the Son of God. Their narrative is chiefly composed of his manifold and ceaseless dealings with men; in St. John we have rather his tranquil and unbroken union with his Father. The heavenly element which forms the *background* of the first three Gospels is the *atmosphere* of the fourth.

2. **Typical Characters.**—No Gospel is so rich in **TYPICAL** but thoroughly **REAL AND LIFELIKE** GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS as the fourth. They are sketched, or rather by their words are made to sketch themselves, with a vividness and precision which, as already observed, is almost proof that the evangelist was an eye-witness of what he records.

Among the groups we have the *disciples* strangely misunderstanding Christ (4.38; 11. 12), yet firmly believing on him (16. 30); *his brethren*, dictating a policy to him and not believing on him (7. 8-5); *John's disciples*, with their jealousy for the honor of their master (3. 26); *the Samaritans*, proud to believe from their own experience rather than on the testimony of a woman (4. 42); *the multitude*, sometimes thinking Jesus possessed, sometimes thinking him the Christ (7. 20, 28, 41); *the Jews*, claiming to be Abraham's seed and seeking to kill the Messiah (8. 33, 37, 40); *the Pharisees*, haughtily asking, "Hath any one of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" (7. 48) and "are we also blind?" (9. 40); *the chief priests*, professing to fear that Christ's success will be fatal to the national existence (11. 48), and declaring to Pilate that they have no king but Cæsar (19. 15). In the sketching of these groups nothing is more conclusive evidence of the evangelist being contemporary with his narrative than the way in which the conflict and fluctuations between belief and unbelief among the multitude and "the Jews" is indicated.

The types of individual character are still more varied, and, as in the case of the groups, they exemplify both sides in the great conflict, as well as those who wavered between the two. On the one hand we have the mother of the Lord (2. 8-5; 19. 25-27), the beloved disciple and his master the Baptist (1. 6-37; 3. 23-36), St. Andrew, and Mary of Bethany, all unfailing in their allegiance; St. Peter falling, and rising again to deeper love (18. 27; 21. 17); St. Philip, rising from eager to firm faith (14. 8); St. Thomas, from desponding and despairing love (11. 16; 20. 25) to faith, hope, and love (20. 28). There is the sober but uninformed faith of Martha (11. 21, 24, 27), the passionate affection of Mary Magdalene (20. 1-18). Among conversions we have the instantaneous but deliberate conviction of Nathanael (1. 49), the gradual but courageous progress in belief of the schismatical Samaritan woman (see on 4. 19) and of the uninstructed man born blind (see on 11. 21), and, in contrast with both, the timid, hesitating confession of Nicodemus, the learned

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF JOHN'S GOSPEL.

rabbi (3. 1; 7. 50; 19. 39). On the other side we have the cowardly wavering of Pilate (18. 38, 39; 19. 1-4, 8, 12, 16), the unscrupulous resoluteness of Caiaphas (11. 49, 50), and the blank treachery of Judas (13. 27; 18. 2-5). Among the minor characters there is the "ruler of the feast" (2. 9, 10), the "nobleman" (4. 49), the man healed at Bethesda (5. 7, 11, 14, 15).

3. Symbolical Events.—From typical characters we pass on to typical or symbolical events. **SYMBOLISM** is a third characteristic of this Gospel. Not merely does it contain the three great allegories of the Sheepfold, the Good Shepherd, and the Vine, from which Christian art has drawn its symbolism from the very earliest times, but the whole Gospel from end to end is penetrated with the spirit of symbolical representation. In nothing is this more apparent than in the eight miracles which the evangelist has selected for the illustration of his divine epic. His own word for them leads us to expect this; to him they are not so much miracles as "signs."

In Nicodemus coming by night, in Judas going out into the night, in the dividing of Christ's garments, and the blood and water from his side, etc., etc., we seem to have instances of the same love of symbolism. These historical details are singled out for notice *because* of the lesson which lies behind them. And if we ask for the source of this mode of teaching there cannot be a doubt about the answer: It is the form in which almost all the lessons of the Old Testament are conveyed. This leads us to another characteristic.

4. Hebrew.—Though written in Greek, St. John's Gospel is in thought and tone, and sometimes in the form of expression also, thoroughly HEBREW, AND BASED ON THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES.

5. A Systematic Book.—Yet another characteristic of this Gospel is its **SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT**. It is the only Gospel which clearly has a plan.

6. Peculiarities of Style.—The last characteristic which our space will allow us to notice is its **STYLE**. The style of the Gospel and of the First Epistle of St. John is unique. But it is a thing to be felt rather than to be defined. The most illiterate reader is conscious of it; the ablest critic cannot analyze it satisfactorily.

These characteristics combined form a book which stands alone in Christian literature, as its author stands alone among Christian teachers; the work of one who for threescore years and ten labored as an apostle. Called to follow the Baptist when only a lad, and by him soon transferred to the Christ, he may be said to have been the first who from his youth up was a Christian. Who therefore could so fitly grasp and state in their true proportions and with fitting impressiveness the great verities of the Christian faith! He had had no deep-seated prejudices to uproot, like his friend St. Peter, and others who were called late in life. He had had no sudden wrench to make from the past, like St. Paul. He had not had the trying excitement of wandering abroad over the face of the earth, like most of the twelve. He had remained at his post at Ephesus, directing, teaching, meditating; until at last when the fruit was ripe it was given to the Church in the fullness of beauty which it is still our privilege to possess and learn to love.

THE LESSON COMMENTARY.

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.*

LESSON I.—January 4.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED.—1 Kings 12. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall—Prov. 16. 18.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—975 B. C. It was, as nearly as we can tell, four hundred and seventy-six years after the Israelites had crossed the Jordan and conquered Palestine. It was perhaps one hundred and twenty years after the fitful rule of judges and prophets had been set aside for the monarchy by the coronation of Saul. Rehoboam's grandfather, David, at the age of twenty-nine, had been crowned king of Judah eighty-one years before this incident, and recognized as king of all Israel seventy-three years before it. In the fortieth year of his reign David resigned his scepter to Solomon. Solomon reigned from 1016 B. C. to 975 B. C., and Rehoboam now inherits his dominions.

PLACE.—Shechem in Central Palestine, a very ancient town (Gen. 33. 18, 19), called Sichem when the Canaanites dwelt there (Gen. 12. 6). In the first century A. D. it was rebuilt by Vespasian, and called Newtown, (in Greek Neapolis). That word has been corrupted by the ignorant Arabs into Nablous, which is the name of the village standing on that site to-day. Here the patriarch Abraham publicly worshiped God. Here Jacob buried his wives' idols. In this vicinity Joseph was sold by his cruel brothers, and here, years afterward, his body was buried by reverential descendants. At the partition of the land after the conquest Shechem came within the bounds of Ephraim, but it was assigned to the Levites, and became a "city of refuge." Abimelech, the son of Gideon the Jewish patriot, seceded from the Hebrew commonwealth and started a little kingdom with Shechem as its capital. After a reign of three years he was expelled by his subjects, and in revenge destroyed the city, and sowed the ground with salt. That was perhaps two hundred and sixty years before the present incident. The Ten Tribes probably gathered there because of its central position. As will be seen from our lessons, it became the first seat of the new monarchy.

PERSONS.—1. Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, king by hereditary claim of all Israel, and actually king of Judah from 975 B. C. to 958 B. C. His mother was Naamah, an Ammonite princess. He was born about 1015 B. C., and was at this time about forty years of age. 2. Jeroboam the son of Nebat was one of the most remarkable characters of Hebrew history. He was an Ephraimite, and would, therefore, be popular with that tribe. His great ability was

* FOR GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDIES OF THE FIRST SIX MONTHS, see pages 17, 18, 21.

early recognized by Solomon, who made him superintendent over the taxes and labors exacted from the tribe of Ephraim. Ahijah the prophet foretold his brilliant future. He seems to have been impatient in his ambitions, and probably conspired against Solomon, who sought his life and compelled him to fly to Egypt. This lesson narrates his return. 3. **Ahijah the Shilonite.** Of this man only four facts are known: a) that he came from the town of Shiloh; b) that he prophesied the rending of the kingdom from Solomon and the coronation of Jeroboam as king of the Ten Tribes; c) that he afterward foretold the death of Jeroboam's six sons, the destruction of the royal family on account of its image worship, and the captivity of Israel; and d) that he wrote a history of the events of Solomon's reign, which is not now in existence. 4. **The counselors.** The older counselors were those who had served under David and Solomon; the younger were probably brought up at court as Rehoboam's companions. 5. "**All Israel.**" Delegates from the Ten Tribes, probably the head men of the chief families; for the tribal feeling was still strong among the Hebrews.

SYNCHRONISTIC NOTES.—After a decadence which had lasted nearly a century the kingdoms of Assyria and Egypt were now rising to something like their former vigor. If it had not been for this temporary decay David never could have carved out his magnificent monarchy, nor Solomon have secured the great wealth necessary to erect the temple at Jerusalem. It enlarges one's views of the plans of Providence to note that the only time in all the history of Israel when the great powers of Assyria and Egypt were simultaneously weak was the time when God raised up David and Solomon for this wonderful work. Shishak or Sesonchis was king of Egypt. This monarch married his daughter to Solomon, but in later years probably quarreled with that Hebrew king, for he fostered his hated enemy Prince Hadad of Edom, and his rebellious subject Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Rezon was king of Syria at Damascus. At the time of this lesson Jerusalem was very near the center of the civilized world, which did not extend more than a thousand miles from the holy city in any direction. Egypt, Assyria, and Phenicia were the only nations besides Israel that could be called civilized. The Greeks were slowly emerging from barbarism, and the commerce of the world was in the hands of the adventurous Phenician navigators.

Authorized Version.

1 And 'Re'ho-bo'am went to She'-chem: for all Is'-ra-el were come to She'-chem to make him king.

Revised Version.

1 'And Re'ho-bo'am went to She'-chem: for all Is'-ra-el were come to

¹ 2 Chron. 10. 1.

² See 2 Chron. 10. 1, etc.

I. THE OLD MEN'S COUNSEL. Verses 1-7.



SCORPION.

1. **Rehoboam**—See introductory paragraph on PERSONA. **Went to Shechem**—From Jerusalem. The journey would take about eight hours' steady traveling. It was probably made by easy stages, and with the lavish splendor characteristic of Oriental royalty. **For**—The Ten Tribes did not go to Shechem because the king was there, but just the reverse: because they had gone thither the king went also. He had not called them together; but their elders, judges, and representatives had assembled in this old Ephraimite capital, as they had done once in Joshua's time (Josh. 24. 1), and probably all Rehoboam's counselors, old and young,

agreed that he must be present there. He seems to have gone unsummoned, with his whole retinue.—*Bähr.* **All Israel**—The bulk of the northerly Ten Tribes. See article on CAUSES OF THE REVOLT, page 8. Their design in meeting was to make him king—to recognize him, as Judah had done (though he had already ascended the throne), on condition, however, that he would agree to their wishes and demands. This was why they did not assemble in Jerusalem, as they were in reality bound to do. Their grandfathers had gone under similar circumstances to Hebron, the place of David's residence, to do him homage. 2 Sam. 5. 1, sq.—*Lange.* This gathering at Shechem was a significant hint, if Rehoboam had properly understood it.

Authorized Version.

2 And it came to pass, when ¹Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat, who was yet ²in E'gypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Sol'o-mon, and Jer'o-bo'am dwelt in E'gypt,)

3 That they sent and called him. And Jer'o-bo'am and all the congregation of Is'ra-el came, and spake unto Re'ho-bo'am, saying,

4 Thy father made our ⁴yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

Revised Version.

2 She'chem to make him king. And it came to pass, when Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat heard of it, (for he was yet in E'gypt, whither he had fled from the presence of king Sol'o-mon, and Jer'o-bo'am dwelt in E'gypt, and they sent and called him;) that Jer'o-bo'am and all the congregation of Is'ra-el came, and spake unto Re'ho-bo'am, saying, Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us,

¹ Chap. 11. 26. — ² Chap. 11. 40. — ³ 1 Sam. 8. 11-18; chap. 4. 7, 22; 9. 15; Job 20, 19, 20, 22, 24; 27. 13-15; Prov. 3. 31; 29. 16; Eccl. 8. 8; Isa. 58. 6; Ezek. 22. 27, 31; 43. 8; Amos 4. 1, 2; Mic. 2. 1, 3; Mal. 2. 8; 1 Thos. 4. 6.

—*Ewald*. It is evident, if not from the selection of that place, at least from the tenor of their language and the concerted presence of Jeroboam, that the people were determined on revolt.—*Speaker's Commentary*. Their object was, when making him king, to renew the conditions and stipulations to which their kings were subject (1 Sam. 10. 25); and to the omission of rehearsing which, under the peculiar circumstances in which Solomon was made king, they were disposed to ascribe the absolutism of his government.—*Jamieson*.

God fulfills himself exactly. Comp. 1 Sam. 8. 11-18. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Not only had the Israelites been foretold of the exactions of their kings, but Solomon had been particularly warned about the results of his turning from God, and probably both the chief actors in this great national convention had still ringing in their ears the words of men of God who had foretold the division of the kingdom. Not to us in detail come such prophecies; but the Bible is full of warnings and promises of a general character, which are intended to be applied in detail to our individual lives. Every divine maxim—whether in Proverbs, or the books of history, or the prophecies, or the gospels, or the epistles—is just as true of the boys and girls in your class, and of the one who teaches them, as it was of those who first heard it.

Each soul works out its own destiny. Rehoboam, taking good counsel, might have avoided this disaster. God would have kept his promise to Jeroboam without his treason. It is nonsense to talk about "fate" and wrongs that "can't be helped."

Beware of bad companionship. "All Israel" was led by one or two unscrupulous persons. There are more weak people than bad people, and the imminent danger of our scholars is that of following bad example. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

Turning-points in life demand especial care. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Rehoboam did not dream that so much hinged on his decision. To many of our pupils, this year—perhaps this week—may prove a point on which their whole lives may turn. They may need wise counsel now.

2, 3. *Jeroboam*—The whole passage should be translated thus: *When Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard (now he was still in Egypt, whither he had fled from the face of Solomon the king, and Jeroboam was dwelling in Egypt), then sent they and called him, and they came, Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel, and spake to Rehoboam, saying.* They had heard of Ahijah's prophecy that Jeroboam should become king, and they knew his ability and influence, and desired his counsel and guidance in this critical period of their history. All this indicates a well-matured plan to throw off the yoke of the house of David.—*Terry*. It is better to omit the italicized words of it, which are not in the Hebrew, and which grammatically refer to the assembly at Shechem, whereas what Jeroboam heard of was the death of Solomon.—*Gardiner*.

4. *Thy father made our yoke grievous*—The word means simply the yoke laid on the neck of beasts designed for labor. Num. 19. 2; Deut. 21. 3; 1 Sam. 6. 7. It is the symbol of servile work. Deut. 28. 48; Lev. 26. 13; Jer. 28. 10, 11. The grievance, therefore, is nothing but the levy-work on Solomon's public buildings; this is made plain by Rehoboam's answer, in verses 11, 14. That Solomon had really exacted too heavy servile work from his people, as did the

Egyptian king in Moses's time (Exod. 1. 11, 13), is generally taken for granted, although the complaint comes from people who were excited with thoughts of secession, and who were jealous of Judah. At their head stood a man, too, who had already tried to raise an insurrection, and had not renounced his ambitious plans in exile. Such a complaint can hardly be taken as valid testimony unless joined to purely historical evidence. We have none such, however. Conscription for working at the public buildings, as well as for war service, was customary throughout the ancient East. Every-where, from Egypt to Babylon, the immense buildings were raised, not by paid workmen, but by conscription. For instance, three hundred and sixty thousand men worked twenty years at one pyramid. Even David had, among his five chief officers, one who was specially "over the tribute" (2 Sam. 20. 24), which was then a standing regulation. This tribute was brought into system in Solomon's time, and Hebrews, as contrasted with foreigners, were treated with gentle consideration. Chaps. 5. 13, etc., and 9. 20, etc. Nowhere is the voice of complaint heard about it. The tribute work was distributed by turns among "all Israel" and the Ten Tribes received no more proportionately than the other two. Therefore the complaint of the "yoke" being "grievous," which they alone make, seems to be only a welcome excuse suggested to



SHECHEM.

them by their former superintendent, Jeroboam. The real motive comes to light later, in verse 16. If we cannot admit the complaint of too hard tribute work to be well founded, still less have we any right to add items to the complaint of which it makes no mention, such as undue income taxes, custom duties, and the general poverty arising from an oppressive sultanate. The sacred historians make very plain how happy and peaceful the people were under Solomon's reign (chap. 4. 20-25; comp. 8. 66), so that the prophet took his kingdom as a type of the Messiah's. There is nothing to show that Israel "sighed" under oppression; and when the people, as well as the king, became at length degenerate in the latter part of his reign, it was rather in consequence of too great prosperity and luxury than of great burdens and poverty. Solomon was threatened, in both addresses of the prophet Ahijah (chap. 11. 11, 31, *et.*), with the partition of his kingdom, not because he had oppressed the people with servile labor and heavy taxations, but solely because he had suffered his strange wives to persuade him to introduce idolatrous forms of worship.—*Bähr.* Still, there is much of incidental injustice and suffering inseparable from the mildest

Authorized Version.

5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

6 And king Re'ho-bo'am ⁶consulted with the old men, that stood before Sol'o-mon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, 'If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants forever.

Revised Version.

5 lighter, and we will serve thee. And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me.

6 And the people departed. And king Re'ho-bo'am took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Sol'o-mon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to

7 return answer to this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants

⁶ Job 12. 12; 22. 1; Prov. 27. 10; Eccl. 10. 4; Jer. 42. 2-5; 43. 2.
⁷ 2 Chron. 10. 7; Prov. 15. 1.

conscription. The people who once clamored for a king that they might be like the nations around them, now began to realize the truth of Samuel's prediction as to the cost of maintaining a king and a court. 1 Sam. 8. 11-18.—*Terry*.

It is a universal fact that men exclaim more concerning oppression than concerning godlessness and other sins; are more careful for the body than for the soul. Exod. 16. 3.—*Cramer*. Our scholars should be deeply impressed, both by our teaching and our example, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Rebellious people easily find in public circumstances means which they amplify and exaggerate in order to give an appearance of justice to their wickedness, and to have some pretext for their criminal designs.—*Lange*. Every temptation is plausible to the rebellious heart.

5. Depart—Rehoboam's hesitancy showed weakness of character. A prince who, upon his accession to the throne, requires time to decide if his rule shall be mild and merciful, or harsh and despotic, cannot have assumed his high, responsible post in the fear and love of God; therefore he need expect no divine blessing. It is well and good, indeed, in all weighty matters to take time for reflection, but in time of sudden danger rapid firm decision is equally necessary. One accustomed to walk in God's ways will at such times take no step which will afterward cause him bitter repentance.—*Lange*. People departed—Retired from Rehoboam's presence, not to return home, but to tarry at Shechem three days to await the king's decision.—*Whedon*.

Delay is dangerous. See ILLUSTRATIONS. If Rehoboam had decided promptly the insurrectionists would have received a severe blow. The "three days" were invaluable to them. When one's duty is clearly seen, the more promptly it is performed the better.

6, 7. The old men—The names of some of these are given in 1 Kings 4. 2-6. They were unquestionably men of great ability. How do ye advise—This was probably Rehoboam's first cabinet meeting. If thou wilt be a servant—We can easily imagine that such a proposal (which would not certainly have succeeded) was not very agreeable to the rash and imperious young king, in whose veins Ammonite blood flowed. Chap. 14. 21.—*Lange*. The constitutional idea of a supreme ruler, president, or king is that he is *the servant*, but not the *slave*, of his people; every official act of a just executive is an act of service to the state. He has the appointment of officers, he is the *executor of the laws*, and justice is administered in his name.—*Clarks*.

We should learn from other people's experience. Even fools sometimes learn by their own. Civilization is simply the art of using other people's experience. Success in individual life comes in the same way. See ILLUSTRATIONS. So does eminent growth in grace.

Great results come from small causes. See ILLUSTRATIONS. And perhaps no causes are so immediately powerful as spoken words. A kind sentence might have won the Ten Tribes back to Rehoboam. See James 3. 2-13. Watch your lips!

The ruler that would hold the affections of his people must first learn to be their servant. He must consult their wishes and interests so as not to seem unmindful of his most humble subject.—*Whedon*. This is as true in republics, and Sunday-school classes, and homes, as in Oriental despotisms. If you covet your scholars' love, "speak good words" to them.

Authorized Version.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shall thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 So Jer'o-bo'am and all the people came to Re'ho-bo'am the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not

Revised Version.

8 for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him.

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye, that we may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke that thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou speak unto them, My little finger is thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you

12 with scorpions. So Jer'o-bo'am and all the people came to Re'ho-bo'am the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given

14 him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will

15 chastise you with scorpions. So the

^v Chap. 3. 7; 14. 21; 2 Chron. 22. 4; Isa. 7. 16; 140. 11; Prov. 12. 6, 7; 10. 6, 11, 14. —a hardly.

II. THE YOUNG MEN'S COUNSEL. Verses 8-11.

8, 9, 10, 11. Forsook the counsel.—He was at once weak and overbearing. The young men that were grown up with him.—It was a custom in different countries to educate with the heir to the throne young noblemen of nearly the same age. The old counselors Rehoboam did not know; with the young nobility he had been familiar.—*Clarke*. My little finger shall be thicker.—A proverbial expression. As much as the *thigh* surpasses the *little finger* in thickness, so much does my power exceed that of my father; and the use that I shall make of it shall be in proportion.—*Clarke*. Whips . . . scorpions.—As the scorpion—an instrument of torture with many lashes like the legs of the animal of this name, and each lash armed with sharp points to lacerate the flesh—is a more terrible scourge than the common whip, so will my severity exceed my father's.—*Terry*. Or the phrase may allude to the reptile, illustrated page 22.

Neglect always brings loss. See ILLUSTRATIONS. There is no exception to this rule. One unbroken chain of cause and effect runs through all the years. Every wrong decision brings its evil consequence. A lost opportunity is the greatest of all losses.

Authorized Version.

unto the people; for ^{the} cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake ^{by} A-hi'jah the Shi'lo-nite unto Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat.

16 So when all Is'ra-el saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, "What portion have we in Da'vid? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jes'se: to your tents, O Is'ra-el: now see to thine own house, David. So Is'ra-el departed unto their tents.

Revised Version.

king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of the LORD, that he might establish his word, which the LORD spake by the hand of A-hi'jah the Shi'lo-nite to Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat. And when all Is'ra-el saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in Da'vid? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jes'se: to your tents, O Is'ra-el: now see to thine own house, Da'vid. So Is'ra-el

⁶ Judges 14, 4; ⁹ Chron. 10, 15; ²² 7.—⁹ Chap. 11, 11.—¹⁰ 2 Sam. 20, 1.

III. THE KING'S DECISION. Verses 12-15.

12, 13, 14, 15. The cause was from the Lord—Better, *for it was a change from Jehovah*. The meaning is, this great change or revolution in the Hebrew state was brought about in the providence of God as a judgment on the nation for the sins of Solomon. He decreed it, and foretold it by the prophet Ahijah. Chap. 11. 80-83. But neither Solomon's sins nor Rehoboam's blind folly and rash imprudence were from the Lord. For them their human authors were solely responsible. But He whose omniscience takes in all future events as foreseen certainties (not as decreed necessities) may well, in respect to events affected by human agency, determine and decree his own future judgments or mercies according to what he foresees men will freely do. So, too, in infinite holiness his determinate counsel and fore-knowledge even delivers up Jesus of Nazareth to death, but this decree influences not causatively the action of those wicked hands that crucify and slay him. See Acts 2. 23.—*Terry*. Rehoboam's weakness (Eccl. 2. 18, 19) and inexperience in public affairs have given rise to the probable conjecture that, like many other princes in the East, he had been kept secluded in the harem till the period of his accession (Eccl. 4. 14), his father being either afraid of his aspiring to the sovereignty, like the two sons of David, or, which is more probable, afraid of prematurely exposing his imbecility. The king's haughty and violent answer to a people already filled with a spirit of discontent and exasperation indicates a great incapacity to appreciate the gravity of the crisis; an utter want of common sense.—*Jamieson*.

True strength is always calm. Don't "get excited." Rehoboam blundered when he decided to refuse the people's request; but to answer them "roughly" was a far greater blunder. Blusterers are nearly always weak men. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

IV. THE CONSEQUENCE. Verses 16, 17.

16, 17. The king's answer was received with mingled scorn and derision. The revolt was accomplished, and yet so quietly that Rehoboam seems to have remained in Shechem, fancying himself the sovereign of a united kingdom, until his chief tax-gatherer, who had been most imprudently sent to treat with the people, had been stoned to death. This opened his eyes, and he fled for security to Jerusalem.—*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*. What portion have we—The old Ephraimite watchword of insurrection and revolt. Comp. 2 Sam. 20. 1.—*Bähr*. Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse does not mean, We can hope for and expect nothing from him; but, We do not belong to him, as Judah does, by race derivation. In the "son of Jesse" there is an allusion to David's humbler descent, just as in the New Testament to the "carpenter's son" (Matt. 13. 55). To your tents, O Israel! is a proverbial call which originated in the time of the march through the wilderness, when the camp was arranged according to the tribes. See to thine own house—See how you can reign over your own tribe in the future; you have no right to us any more.—*Bähr*. In this whole cry the deeply rooted dislike to David's royal house is strongly expressed, and we can perceive a more potent cause for the partition than the alleged oppression of Solomon.—*Keil*. Departed unto their tents—

Authorized Version.

17 But *as for* the children of Is'ra-el which dwelt in the cities of Ju'dah, Re'-ho-bo'am reigned over them.

Revised Version.

17 departed unto their tents. But as for the children of Is'ra-el which dwelt in the cities of Ju'dah, Re'-ho-bo'am reigned over them.

“Chap. 11. 12.

Went to their different homes and proceeded to make arrangements for founding a kingdom separate from Judah.—*Terry*. Children of Israel . . . cities of Judah—Israelites not belonging to the house of Judah, but dwelling within the territory of that tribe.—*Terry*.

After failure, what? No repentance now can bring back the Ten Tribes; but Rehoboam may rule Judah wisely or wickedly as he wills. Some of our older scholars may have made partial failures of life; but the future is still theirs. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

CAUSES OF THE REVOLT FROM REHOBAM.

[Compiled from Stanley, Bähr, and others.]

The fact that the partition of the kingdom, this beginning of its end, immediately followed its culmination of earthly glory under David and Solomon shows how frail and perishable it was. This partition cannot be traced to the defiant and thoughtless answer of Rehoboam only; it was produced by deeper and more general causes, lying in the character of the people and in the mutual relations of the tribes.

The tribe of Judah and the double tribe of Joseph (known as Ephraim and Manasseh), were rivals from the outset. The progenitors of each were peculiarly favored in Jacob's dying blessing (Gen. 49. 8-12, 22-25); and both early became more numerous, and therefore more powerful, than the other tribes. Before the entrance into Canaan Judah numbered 76,500, and the double tribe of Joseph numbered 85,200. Num. 26. 22-28, 34-37. This tribe claimed the largest territory at the division of the land (Josh. 17. 14; 1 Chron. 5. 1) on account of its numbers; and because it had inherited Reuben's birthright. But “the scepter” had been promised to Judah, and the leaders in the march through the desert, as well as in the conquest of Canaan, headed that tribe. 1 Chron. 5. 2; Num. 2. 3; 10. 14; Judg. 1. 2; 20. 18. Both tribes were warlike. Judg. 1. 4, 10; 8. 1, *sq.*; Psa. 78. 9. Each regarded itself as evenly matched with the other. Added to this there was a difference in the character and pursuits of the tribes: Judah became the leader and head of the theocracy and the covenant, therefore of higher religious life (Gen. 49. 10; Psa. 60. 9; 78. 67, *sq.*; 114. 1, 2); Ephraim represented the secular side of the people's life, and with it the consciousness of material strength and earthly abundance appears in the foreground. Gen. 48. 20, *sq.*; Deut. 33. 12; Psa. 78. 9, *sq.* There was, therefore, in the latter more receptivity to what has been called “nature-religion,” and a tendency to independence of any other tribe, and especially of one not entirely its equal.

This tendency to draw apart, which appeared thus early in the nation, grew stronger in the distracted times of the Judges, asserting itself sometimes with great energy. After Saul's death the two chief tribes formally separated under different kings (2 Sam. 2. 4-11); this separation, however, lasted only seven years and a half, after which the revolted tribes went over to David, the king of Judah. 2 Sam. 5. 1, *sq.*

But the more the power and authority of Judah increased under David and Solomon, so much the more did the old jealousy and love of independence grow in Ephraim. That tribe was very unwilling that the dominant authority of Judah should be secured by its service. Jeroboam's first attempt to raise an insurrection miscarried, but the desire for independence broke out again more violently after Solomon's death, for it was very evident that Rehoboam did not in the least resemble his father.

To the house of Joseph—that is, to Ephraim and Manasseh with its adjacent tribe of Benjamin—had belonged, down to the time of David, all the chief rulers of Israel: Joshua, the conqueror; Deborah, the one prophetess; Gideon, the one regal spirit of the judges; Abimelech and Saul, the first kings; Samuel, the restorer of the state after the fall of Shiloh. It was natural that, with such an inheritance of glory, Ephraim should chafe under any rival supremacy. Even against the impartial sway of its own Joshua, and of its kindred heroes, Gideon and Jephthah, its proud spirit was always in revolt; how much more when the blessing of Joseph seemed to be

altogether merged in the blessing of the rival Judah; when the Lord "refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved." *Psa.* 78. 67, 68. All these embers of disaffection, which had well-nigh burst into a general conflagration in the revolt of Sheba, were still glowing; it needed but a breath to blow them into a flame.

Such a temporary division of the kingdom as this was not inconsistent with the higher unity of the divine monarchy. But as neither of the kingdoms adhered to that higher unity, Ephraim forsaking the law from the beginning, and Judah only sometimes faithful, the division became, through the guilt of both kingdoms, the germ of their destruction. *Matt.* 12. 25. God's ideal was that of an eternal kingdom, an "inward kingdom of God," which should embrace all nations, in which "Ephraim should not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim" (*Isa.* 11. 13), and in which "one king should be king to them all." *Ezek.* 37. 15-22. Our lessons will show that as the two monarchies gradually approached their dissolution the longing for an enduring and eternal kingdom became more ardent, and the words of the Hebrew prophets more definite and significant.

A complete lack of religious feeling and manner is observable in these two opposing parties. When Joshua called the elders together in Shechem, before his end, "they presented themselves before God." *Josh.* 24. 1, *sq.* When Samuel did the same at Mizpeh, he said to them, "Present yourselves before the Lord." *1 Sam.* 10. 19. When all the tribes came to David in Hebron, after Ish-bosheth's death, and acknowledged him king over all Israel, they called to mind Jehovah's word, and David "made a league with them before the Lord." *2 Sam.* 5. 1-3. When Solomon assembled the heads of the tribes at the dedication, the ceremony not only began with divine worship, but ended by the "king and all Israel with him offering sacrifice before the Lord." *Chap.* 8. 1, 5, 62. In the present instance, however, nothing was done "before the Lord," but every thing was done without him. Neither the tribe-heads nor Jeroboam nor Rehoboam nor his counselors, old or young, inquire after God. That he is their true sovereign, before whom they must all bow, does not occur to them. They think only which of the two parties should rule the other. Thus are revolutions and anarchy made ready.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

God fulfills himself exactly. Ver. 1.—(*Comp.* *1 Sam.* 8. 11-18.) However long the chain of second causes may be, the first link is always in God's hand. The bee builds its honeycomb with mathematical exactness. To combine strength with economy certain angles must be formed. *Koenig* ascertains that 109 deg. 28 min. and 70 deg. 34 min. fulfill these conditions. *Marand's* measurement of the cell results in 109 deg. 28 min. and 70 deg. 32 min. This gives a discrepancy of $\frac{1}{10000}$ part of a circle. But *Lord Brougham* proves *Marand's* wrong by exactly two minutes, and the bee's cell perfect as an instance of greatest strength from least material. The God who guides the bee's instinct so wonderfully is not less careful to fulfill his promises and threatenings.

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;

Though with patience he stands waiting, with exactness grinds he all.—*Longfellow.*

God's errands never fail.—*Whittier.*

Turning points demand care. Vers. 1-5.—When traveling in the Alps one often sees a small iron cross planted at a steep turn in the road or on the verge of some immense precipice. Each cross marks the spot where a too careless tourist was lost.

The European nations that espoused the Reformation have prospered, while those that rejected it have had centuries of ill, and are still ranged on the side of superstition.

Jacob missed a chance at Bethel. It took twenty years, one thousand miles of travel, and many sorrows before he found another as good at Peniel.

There is a tide in the affairs of men

Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune.—*Shakespeare.*

Decide not rashly. The decision made

Can never be recalled. The gods implore not,

Plead not, solicit not; they only offer

Choice and occasion, which once being past

Return no more.—*Longfellow.*

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife with truth and falsehood, for the good or evil side.—*Lowell*.

Delay is dangerous. Ver. 5.—Alexander the Great once said: "I conquered the world by not waiting."

Six hours' delay lost Waterloo for Napoleon. A deluge of rain the evening before caused him to wait till the ground settled for artillery, and this gave Blücher time to join Wellington with re-enforcements.

He who is not ready to-day will be less so to-morrow.—*Ovid*.

"The road of By and By leads to the town of Never."

Experience should teach us. Ver. 6.—Old men had great authority among people of antiquity. Rome borrowed this trait from the Lacedemonians. The titles "senate" and "father," applied to statesmen, arose from the habit of depending on the wisdom of men of years.

"Young men think old men to be fools, and old men know young men to be so."

Common sense is the basis of genius, and experience is hands and feet to every enterprise.—*Emerson*.

Experience joined with common sense
To mortals is a providence.—*Green*.

Great results come from small causes. Ver. 7.—President Garfield traced his conversion to wearing a certain pair of stockings. He had made one trip on a canal-boat, and was about to start for another when he injured his foot chopping wood. The blue dye of his socks poisoned the wound. While kept at home a revival broke out and he was converted.

On the summit of a hill in a Western State is a court-house so situated that rain-drops on one side descend into Lake Erie, and on the other, *via* the Mississippi, to the Gulf of Mexico. A breath of wind determines the destination of these rain-drops for three thousand miles.

Think naught a trifle, though it small appear,
Small sands the mountain, moments make the year,
And trifles life.—*Young*.

Thus in the pettiness of life
Note thou seeds of grandeur, and watch the hour-glass
Of time with the eyes of an heir of immortality.—*Tupper*.

Examples from History: The Reformation resulted from a text flashed on Luther's mind while climbing Santa Scala at Rome; the mechanical use of steam, from Watt noting the dance of a kettle lid; electricity, from Franklin using a kite; glass, from sailors making fire between lumps of soda on the sand; the principle of the suspension bridge from a spider's web.

"For want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, for want of the horse the rider was lost, for want of the rider the battle was lost."

Neglect always brings loss. Vers. 8, 11.—The mole elects to spend its life-time under-ground. Nature revenges by closing its eyes or reducing them to a rudimentary state.

Crustacea of Mammoth Cave of Kentucky seem to have eyes. A swift incision with scalpel and a glance through the lens shows the front perfect but a mass of ruin behind, the optic nerve a shrunk, insensate thread—the result of the discarded opportunities of their ancestors, who left the sunlight for the cave.—*Drummond*.

True strength is always calm. Ver. 13.—Great forces, like gravitation, heat and dew, are noiseless. Love never speaks loud. Smooth water runs deep. Power can do by gentleness that which violence fails to accomplish. A soft answer turneth away wrath.

Alexander the Great manifested such calmness on the eve of a battle in which his fortune lay at stake that one of his officers expressed surprise. "How," said the conqueror, "is it possible for us not to be calm since the enemy [Darius, with fifteen times as large an army] is coming to deliver himself into our hands?"

Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just. . . .
Be just and fear not.—*Shakespeare*.

Mightiest powers by deepest calms are fed,
And sleep how oft in things that gentlest be.—*Barry Cornwall*.

After failure, what? Vers. 14, 16, 17.—General Grant said, that the greatest general was he who could learn most from his failures.

Architectural skill erects the most massive edifices on mud.

"It is never too late to mend."

Our to-days and yesterdays
Are the blocks with which we build.—*Longfellow.*

. . . Men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.—*Tennyson.*

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **Draw a map** of the empire won by David, and ruled over by Solomon, and show how much larger it was than the territory of the twelve tribes. Call attention to the brief period in which the promise of Josh. 1. 4 was fulfilled.

2. **Show the elements of weakness** and of disintegration which existed in the empire during the later years of Solomon, and which at once rose to the surface at the accession of Rehoboam. These were: 1.) The strong rivalry of the tribes of Ephraim and Judah. 2.) The corrupting influence of idolatry, which infected all classes of society. 3.) The extravagance of the court, which caused heavy taxation and financial difficulty among the people. 4.) The want of assimilation among the conquered nations and the various tribes of Israel.

3. **Give a word-picture** of the coronation of Rehoboam. Why was it necessary to go to Shechem? Why did the people not gather at Jerusalem? Show Shechem on the map, and describe its situation. What events of this lesson group around this city?

4. **One man appears prominently** in the gathering of the people. Who was he? What have we learned of this man before? We may look at him as a patriot seeking the rights of the people, or as a demagogue seeking a throne for himself. Notice his traits in each aspect.

5. **The demands of the people** should be noticed. Were they just and right? Making all allowance for the ambitious schemes of Jeroboam, and his interest to show the wrongs of the people in a strong light, it is probable that their complaints had some true basis, and that a reform was needed. What parallels in history may be shown for this popular uprising?

6. **The king's folly** is shown in his treatment of the people. Notice the two kinds of advice. Which was the wiser, and why? The well-known proverb, "Old men for counsel," is illustrated here.

7. **Draw lines** showing the five little kingdoms into which Solomon's empire was broken up: Syria, Israel, Judah, Moab, and Edom. How much God's people lost by their lack of unity in spirit! The deepest cause of the division was that Israel had forsaken God and lost the fervor of its first love.

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LESSON II.—January 11.

IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL.—1 KINGS 12. 25-33.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.—Exod. 20. 4.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

**TIME.**—Probably about 970 B. C. See **CONNECTING LINKS**.

PLACES.—1. **Shechem**, in central Palestine [described in **PLACES**, Lesson I, page 21]. 2. **Penuel**, on the brook Jabbok, in eastern Palestine; a place rich in historic memories (Gen. 32. 30; Judg. 8. 8), and of importance as a military outpost. 3. **Dan**, at one of the sources of the Jordan, earlier called Laish, in the very north of Palestine, was frequently mentioned as a limit of the land, in the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba." It was so remote from the influence of the rest of the nation that its inhabitants lived "after the manner of the Zidonians;" that is, they were seafaring people rather than shepherds and husbandmen like their brethren. The places chosen by Jeroboam were at each limit of his kingdom, and had been associated with religious worship in ancient times. See Judg. 18. 30; 20. 18, 26; 1 Sam. 10. 8.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Bible. 4. **Bethel**, in the tribe of Benjamin.

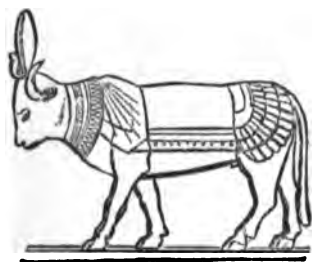
CONNECTING LINKS.—The kingdom of Judah, under Rehoboam, undertook to make war upon the Ten Tribes immediately after their secession, but was forbidden by the prophet Shemaiah. 1 Kings 12. 21-24. Four or five years were passed by Jeroboam, the energetic king of Israel, in making strong his fortifications against his enemies in all directions. As soon as he felt himself secure against attacks from the outside he turned his attention to a tendency among his own people which he foresaw would disintegrate independent national feeling, and might interfere with the permanence of his dynasty.

Authorized Version.

25 Then Jer'o-bo'am built She'chem in mount E'phra-im, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Pe-nu'el.

Revised Version.

25 Then Jer'o-bo'am built She'chem in the hill country of E'phra-im, and dwelt therein; and he went out from

I. POLICY. Verses 25-27.

25. **Jeroboam built Shechem**—Enlarged and fortified it for a royal residence.—*Terry*. It had in early days been a strong town with gates.—*Lumby*. For **Mt. Ephraim**, here, we should rather read with the Revised Version, "the hill country of Ephraim."—*Cambridge Bible*. **Dwelt therein**—Not exclusively, for in chap. 14. 17 we find him dwelling at Tirzah. **Went out from thence**—That is, Shechem was the base of operations in the building and fortifying of other cities.—*Terry*. **Penuel**—Where Jacob wrestled with the angel (Gen. 32. 30), and whose tower and inhabitants, in the time of the judges, Gideon had destroyed. Judg. 8. 17.—*Terry*. It was an object of importance to re-

store this fortress, as it lay on the caravan road from Gilead to Damascus and Palmyra, and secured the frontier on that quarter.—*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*. A force stationed there would not only protect the land from invaders (*Duncker, Keil, Cambridge Bible*) but also secure the territory beyond Jordan against any attacks from Judah. There is no doubt that he built these fortifications by tribute-labor, like Solomon (chap. 9. 15. *sq.*); the "grievous service" (ver. 4) did not, therefore, cease under him, and the complaint against Rehoboam appears all the more like a pretext.—*Bahr*.

Authorized Version.

26 And Jer'o-bo'am said in 'his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of Da'vid:

27 If this people 'go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Je-ru'salem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Reh'o-bo'am king of Ju'dah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Re'ho-bo'am king of Ju'dah.

Revised Version.

26 thence, and built Pe-nu'el. And Jer'o-bo'am said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of Da'vid:

27 if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Je-ru'salem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Re'ho-bo'am king of Judah; and they shall kill me, and return to

¹ Rom. 8. 7.—² Deut. 12. 5.

Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. That course brings permanent success, and that course only. Jeroboam sought first the strength of his fortifications, and, as a consequence, when at length he turned his attention to religious affairs he took the wrong course. Let us take warning by him.

Exercise forethought. Jeroboam sadly lacked moral rectitude, genuine religious sensibility; but notwithstanding these deplorable faults he is a conspicuous exemplar of certain noble qualities of character. Take example by the forethought, decision, promptitude, and industry which brought him immediate success, while you take warning from the godlessness which brought sorrow to himself and ruin to his dynasty.

26, 27. Jeroboam said in his heart—He earnestly soliloquized. The expression implies deep thought, and far-sighted consideration. He not only thoroughly considered the subject within himself, but he also took counsel with his most intimate and interested advisers. Ver. 28. He did not wish nor design to introduce heathenish idolatry into his kingdom, but he was apprehensive that, if all his people went up to Jerusalem to worship, their hearts would soon revolt from him, and turn to the government of Rehoboam.—*Terry*. The idea was forced on the king's mind by the approach of the Feast of Tabernacles, at which it had been usual for the people to go up in great numbers to Jerusalem, and to live there for some days.—*Josephus*. If this people go up to do sacrifice—There appears to have been no thought in the popular mind that the choice of a different ruler for the Ten Tribes would break their connection with the worship at the temple. So that we must judge the temple to have now become the one recognized place for worship.—*Lumby*. Then shall the heart of this people turn—After the first excitement of the revolt was over and Jeroboam had begun to exercise lordship in his turn, the attraction of the temple and the prestige of the older family, and especially the glories attaching to the house of David, would begin to re-assert their power. Jeroboam expresses this feeling when he still calls Rehoboam their lord.—*Cambridge Bible*. They shall kill me—When they have begun to repent of the step which they have taken at my leading. Such reaction of feeling is more common in Eastern than in Western minds.—*Lumby*.

Rank is shadowed by care. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The first results of Jeroboam's accession to the coveted throne were multiplied tasks and cares. Every young man and woman passes through a similar experience with every promotion of life and every increase of wealth. God's blessing is the only one that "addeth no sorrow therewith."

Early impressions endure. Jeroboam's anxiety was not without reason. His subjects from their babyhood had been taught to revere David's family. The depth of first impressions is the most powerful incentive to Christian labor on behalf of the young. Parents and teachers should never forget it; and young people should themselves conscientiously bear it in mind. Spoken words, books, pictures, noticed now, will never be forgotten. What a moral responsibility this entails! See ILLUSTRATIONS.

The danger of relapse. Jeroboam was just now very popular, but he knew how unstable is the human heart. This truth bears on spiritual experience. None are secure without divine keeping. Even Paul feared lest he should become a castaway. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Bread of religion. See ILLUSTRATIONS. No one has strongly stood up for God in a sinful community without being made immediately aware of the chronic fear of spiritual influences felt by the average sinner. A truth which has many applications. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life;" the breadth and attractiveness of the broad road lead only to death.

Authorized Version.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made ²two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Je-ru'sa-lem: behold ¹thy gods, O Is-ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of E'gypt.

29 And he set the one in ¹Beth'-el, and the other he put in ¹Dan.

30 And this thing became ¹a sin: for the people went to *worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.

Revised Version.

28 Re'ho-bo'am king of Ju'dah. Where-upon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, ¹It is too much for you to go up to Je-ru'sa-lem; behold thy gods, O Is-ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of E'gypt. And he set the one in Beth'-el, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to *worship* before ¹the one, even unto Dan.

¹ Kings 10. 29; 17. 16. —² Exod. 32. 4. —³ Gen. 28. 19; Hos. 4. 15. —⁴ Judg. 18. 29. —⁵ Chap. 13. 24; 2 Kings 17. 21.

¹ Or, *Ye have gone up long enough.* —² Or, *each of them.*

II. DECEIT. Verse 28.

28. Two calves of gold—Jeroboam's residence in Egypt had made him familiar with the calf-worship so largely practiced there, and this may have had something to do with the erection of these golden shrines; but the people had already become accustomed to the sight of the figures of oxen in their religious ceremonial by their presence as supporters of the molten sea at the temple of Jerusalem. And as it had now become needful to provide some substitute for the ark and its cherubim, it was natural to adopt the semblance of an animal with whose presence they were already familiarized. These calves were not set up to be worshiped as idols, any more than were the ark and other sacred shrines at Jerusalem, but were designed to be symbols of Jehovah. They were made, like the golden calf at Sinai, of wood or other material overlaid with gold.—*Terry*. This must not be misunderstood, however, as in any sense introducing Egyptian idolatry. All the false gods that were afterward worshiped by the Ten Tribes or by Judah were, without exception, those of interior Asia. The material and the workmanship of the golden calves remind us of Asia; the Egyptians had only stone images; they had no images that were cast, golden, or overlaid with gold. The bull was, according to the view common to all ancient peoples, a symbol of the creative power. There was no type of divinity so universal in the ancient world as the bull. Jeroboam wanted to give an intelligent and acceptable symbol of Jehovah to the people, and he could have scarcely chosen any thing but the bull.—*Langa*. It is too much for you to go up—Rather, *Ye have gone up long enough*. To the mind of the Israelite there might be a reason for ceasing altogether to go to Jerusalem, now that the kingdoms were divided, but there could be no excuse from the fatigue of the journey. Jeroboam's argument was, "You have chosen a new king, choose also new places for worship," (comp. Ezek. 44. 6, where the sense is "Have done with your abominations.")—*Cambridge Bible*. This was not the last time that religion was made a State engine to serve political purposes.—*Clarke*. Behold thy gods—Rather, *Behold thy God*. He would no more establish polytheism than would Aaron.—*Terry*.

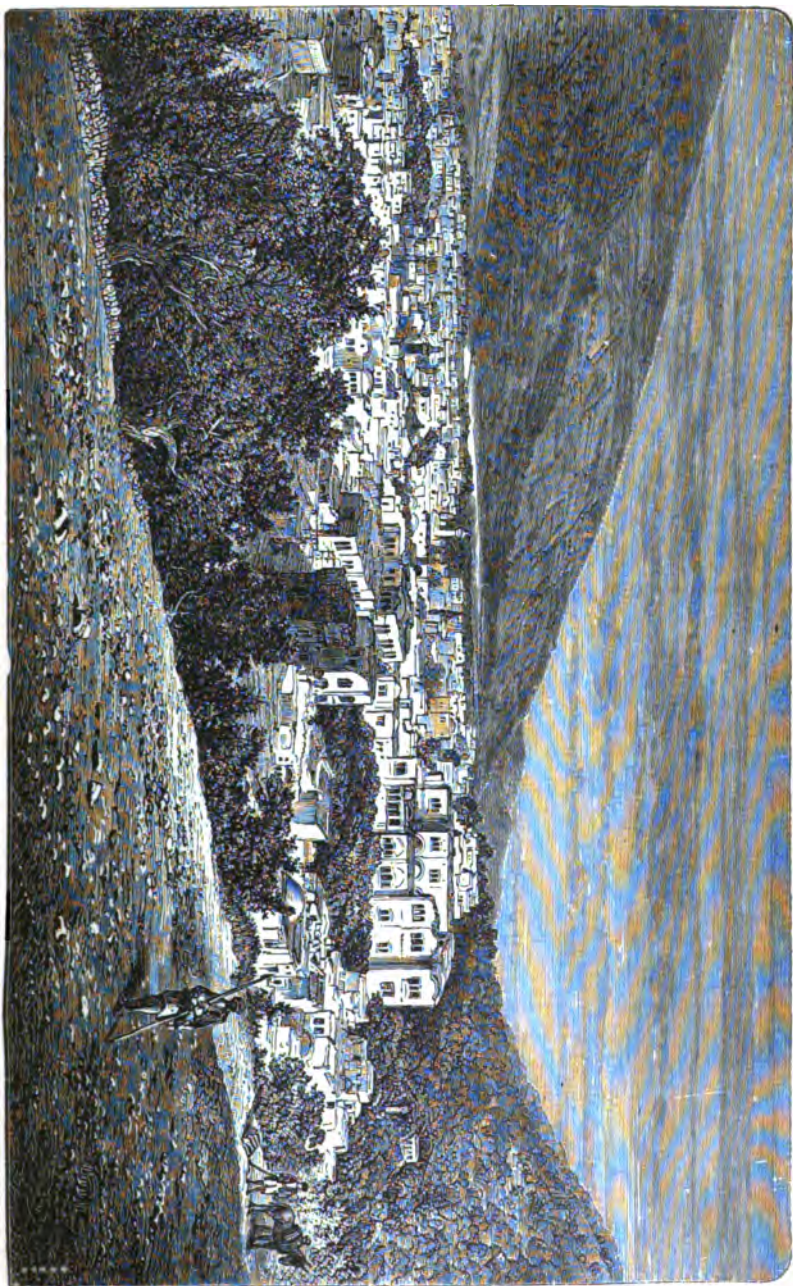
The attractiveness of sin deducts nothing from its sinfulness. In practical religious work we must never forget the facility with which Satan dons the robes of an angel of light. When seen in the true light sin is not one half so attractive as godliness. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Symbolism in worship is a most insidious danger. At times even in the most spiritual Protestant worship roots of this evil seem to linger and need uprooting.

III. IDOLATRY. Verses 29-30.

29. Bethel . . . Dan. See paragraph on PLACES. The latter place was the most frequented—for the words (ver. 30) should be rendered "the people, even to Dan, went to worship before the one." Jer. 48, 13; Amos 4. 4, 5; 5. 5; Hos. 5. 8; 10. 8.—*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*.

30. This thing became a sin—It was not designed to be idolatry, but it speedily ran into it. How could it result otherwise, for it was a direct violation of the second commandment, and a likening of the glory of the invisible God to an ox that eateth grass!—*Terry*. The text means what is afterward always spoken of as "the sin of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin." Chap. 14. 16; 15. 26, 30, 34; 16. 2, 19, 26, 31; 21. 22; 22. 52; 2 Kings 8. 3; 10. 29, 31; 13. 2, 6, 11; 14. 24; 15. 9, 18, 24, 28; 17. 21, 22; 23. 15.



THE CITY OF NABOU, ON THE PROBABLE SITE OF JEROBAM'S CAPITAL.

[Mount Gerizim is seen on the left side in the distance, and Mount Ebal on the right.]



Authorized Version.

31 And he made a 'house of high places, and 'made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Le'vi.

32 And Jer'o-bo'am ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto 'the feast that is in Ju'dah, and he ' offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth'-el, ' sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and ' he placed in Beth'-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he ' offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth'-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he ' had devised of his own heart;

Revised Version.

31 And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, which were not of the sons of

32 Levi. And Jer'o-bo'am ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Ju'dah, and he ' went up unto the altar; so did he in Beth'-el, ' sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth'-el the priests of the high places which he had made. And he ' went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth'-el on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month

* Chap. 12. 32. — Num. 3. 10, chap. 12. 33; 2 Kings 17. 32; 2 Chron. 11. 14; Esch. 44. 1. — Lev. 22. 33; Num. 29. 19; chap. 8. 2, 3. — Or, went up to the altar, etc. — Or, to sacrifice. — 11 Amos 7. 12. — Or, went up to the altar, etc. — 12 Num. 15. 22.

* Or, offered upon. — Or, to sacrifice.

31. A house of high places—The word here certainly does not mean a temple, properly speaking, but probably a kind of cell for the image.—*Bähr*. The graven image must have its shrine.—*Cambridge Bible*. At each of the high places he built houses suitable to the worship that was to be established at them. So the houses of high places (chap. 12. 32; 2 Kings 17. 29, 32; 23. 19) are the shrines for worship built at the high places.—*Whedon*. Made priests of the lowest of the people—Rather, *from the whole of the people*. Indiscriminately, from the entire population without reference to tribes. The priesthood had hitherto been hereditary, and confined to the tribe of Levi; but Jeroboam annulled this divine arrangement, probably because the Levites refused to give their sanction to the new forms of worship, and thus obliged him to do this or have no priests at all.—*Terry*. The Levites, who before the division of the kingdom had been scattered among all the tribes, probably opposed the king's new devices, and now, in the main, withdrew to the southern tribes.—*Cambridge Bible*. By their piety and numbers they greatly "strengthened the kingdom of Judah." See 2 Chron. 11. 13-17.

32. A feast in the eighth month—Solomon fixed upon the feast of tabernacles, in the seventh month (chap. 8. 2), for the dedication of the temple, and Jeroboam selects the same feast for the dedication of his house at the high place in Bethel, but he ordains that it be held a month later there than it was in Judah.—*Terry*. The "eighth month" corresponded with portions of October and November.—*R. R. D.* The ostensible reason for the change might be that the ingathering or harvest was later in the northern parts of the kingdom; but the real reason was to eradicate the old associations with this, the most welcome and joyous festival of the year.—*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*. The fifteenth day—He adhered to the day of the month on account of the weak, who might take offense at the innovations.—*Keil*. The feast that is in Judah—The feast of tabernacles, which continued to be celebrated in Judah according to law.—*Terry*.

Bad measures are often introduced with a veneer of righteousness that makes them pass for a time as the genuine article. Jeroboam conformed his feasts and ceremonies as nearly as possible to those of Moses. Modern politicians and tempters of all sorts often pursue the same policy, and deceive the very elect. But veneered pine remains pine, and conventional decorous sin is as bad as any other.

33. He offered upon the altar—Jeroboam probably performed the functions of high-priest himself, that he might in his own person condense the civil and ecclesiastical powers.—*Clarks*. This verse forms the transition to the next section, chap. 23, which relates what happened at the celebration of the festival at Bethel. Jeroboam ascended the altar to burn sacrifice, and just as he was about to do so a man of God came, etc. Chap. 13. What verse 33 repeats from verse 32, as well as the words which he had devised of his own heart, shows the writer's intention to

Authorized Version.
and ordained a feast unto the children of Is'ra-el: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

Revised Version.
which he had devised of his own heart: and he ordained a feast for the children of Is'ra-el, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense.

d to burn incense.—13 Chap. 12. 1.

Another reading is, apart.—Or, offered upon.

display the arbitrary nature of Jeroboam's proceedings, which called forth the occurrence of chap. 18.—*Bähr.*

Sin comes little by little. Solomon's idolatry had prepared the people for Jeroboam's abominations; and Jeroboam's symbolic worship of Jehovah soon led to grosser idolatry. Little by little the Church conforms to the world, the earnest Christian becomes lukewarm; little by little our youth are drawn away from the path of virtue.

We are responsible for all our influence, whether conscious or unconscious. See ILLUSTRATIONS. If our hearts are right our influence will be right.

Large harvests from small sowing. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Moral compromise is always a blunder. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Half right and half wrong is all wrong. Compromise measures suit the friends of neither God nor the devil.

Penalties of disobedience to God are sure. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Tell the old fable of Nemesis. Jeroboam's punishment came, as threatened; so will yours and mine. One might as well expect to fall from a high tower and not be hurt, as to fall from grace without suffering the consequences.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Rank is shadowed by care. Ver. 26.—Alexander was superstitiously troubled because ivy would not grow in his garden at Babylon.

The Emperor Domitian so dreaded assassination that he lined with polished marble the ends of the corridor in which he took exercise, so as to reflect the image of any one behind him.

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.—Shakespeare.

A crown! what is it?

It is to bear the miseries of a people!

To hear their murmurs, feel their discontents,

And sink beneath a load of splendid care.—*H. More.*

Early impressions endure. Ver. 26.—In the British Museum you may see stone slabs with marks of ruin that fell before Adam lived, and the foot-print of some wild bird that walked across the beach—impressions made while the sand was susceptible, and then retained forever.

Goldsmith says he brought from Ireland his brogue and his blunders, and they never left him.

A Greenlander, after years spent in the United States, took sick and started for home in a dying condition. During the voyage he called out, "Go on deck and look if you can see ice." He knew that if they could he was near home. His first impression was his last thought.

Woman brought from India to America when a child; totally forgot her native language; took fever in old age and talked in her mother-tongue.

Danger of relapse. Ver. 26.—Numbers of the early African churches, noted at first for their fiery zeal (A. D. 251), became subject to such paroxysms of apostasy that, under the title of Lapsi, they were excluded the pale of Christianity.

Xerxes crowned his footmen in the morning and beheaded them in the evening of the same day.

An attempt to worship Saint Paul was soon followed by stoning him. Acts 14. 8-19.

A flock of tame pigeons, adorned with an infinite variety of marking, if let loose on an uninhabited island, become changed in time into the same color—dark, slaty blue.—*Drummond.*

Dread of religion. Ver. 27.—*Maffat's* story of an African savage who came to him in distress. His dog had devoured part of a New Testament. The owner saw the moral change effected in men by the book, and feared the dog would be thenceforth good for nothing as a hunter.

A young man, who opposed religion, had a sister under concern for her soul. "I'll give you five dollars," said he, "if you'll quit this nonsense and be yourself."

The God whom love beholds rises like mountains which carry summer up their sides to the very top; the sternly just God whom sinners dread stands cold against the sky like Mont Blanc, and from his icy sides the soul plunges headlong to unrecalled destruction.—*Beecher*.

Sin made attractive. Ver. 28.—Like the poisonous upas tree, tempting weary men beneath its shade, and insinuating death into its victims. Like apples of Sodom, fair to the eye, but turning to acrid ashes on the lips. Like the magician's rod, glittering and powerful, but when caught, starting into a hideous serpent, which plunged its fang into the hand of the tempted one. Like the Syren's song, enchanting mariners till they were lost in whirlpool.

Our sun is 886,000 miles in diameter, yet, if viewed from a distant star through a telescope having a silk thread across its lens, it would be invisible. So self-interest blinds to wrong.

The famous Rowland Hill was astonished at a drove of pigs which voluntarily followed a man to a slaughter-house. He discovered, on examination, that the man carried a basket of beans, out of which he occasionally dropped a few. So Satan beguiles by pleasing baits.

Nearly all the poisonous fungi are brilliant scarlet or speckled white, the healthful ones brown or gray.

O what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!—*Shakespeare*.

Plate sin with gold and the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it with brass, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.—*Shakespeare*.

Influence leads—whither? Ver. 30.—A young English officer was intrusted by Lord Wolsley with the command of a detachment at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, and directed to be in a certain position at daylight of the next day. By moonlight he brought his men through by a long and difficult march. At close of the fight he lay dying in a tent. Lord Wolsley heard of it, hurried to his bedside, and bent over his friend, who asked, "General, didn't I lead them straight?" When our Captain greets us, what answer?

As a great tree in a forest when it falls drags down many others with it, so also are many others carried along by the bad example of those who rule, when they fall away from their religion, or sin otherwise grossly against God.—*Starks*.

Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.—*Goldsmith*.

Heaven does with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves.—*Shakespeare*.

We scatter seeds with careless hand,
And dream we ne'er shall see them more;
But for a thousand years
Their fruit appears
In weeds that mar the land,
Or healthful store.—*John Keble*.

Large harvests from small sowing. Ver. 30.—The dissolute conduct of two men, Charles II. and the Duke of Buckingham, stamped itself for centuries on the English nation. The licentious courts of Louis XIV. and XV. corrupted the French people. The apostasy of Julian and the errors of Constantine were felt through distant ages.

A blade of grass took fire, and the prairies were burnt to the horizon.

A little child touched a spring, and the spring closed a valve. The lab'ring engine burst; a thousand lives were in that ship wrecked by an infant's finger.—*Tupper*.

Burns in his last visit to Mrs. Riddle deplored the improper lines he had written, and feared they would be raked together after his death and published to the injury of men.

Fancy a man cutting a hole in a ship's bottom inside his own berth, and arguing it only affected himself.

The evil that men do lives after them.—*Shakespeare*.

This thing became a sin. Ver. 30.—A lady who heard Romaine in London said: "I like your preaching, and can give up every thing but one." "What is that, madam?" "Cards, sir." "You think you couldn't be happy without them?" "No, sir." "Then they are your God, and to them you must look for salvation."

One sin leads to another. Vers. 30-32.—Like the melting of a lower glacier upon the Alps—the larger and higher must follow.

Lust dwells hard by Hate.

The coral insect, when started, will not stay till an island has been created.

Sow act, reap habit; sow habit, reap character; sow character, reap destiny.

Fable of camel who was granted permission to warm his nose in the miller's tent; nose followed by head, head by neck, then shoulders and entire body, and the poor miller was crowded into the outer darkness and cold.

This lie brought forth others,
Dark sisters and brothers,
And fathers and mothers,
A horrible crew.

Moral compromise is always a blunder. Vers. 32, 33.—When American Indians embraced Christianity through the labors of Eliot, the missionary, they were told that gaming was sinful. They asked if it would be right to repudiate debts contracted before conversion by gaming with Indians who did not pray. Mr. Eliot urged on the creditors that gaming was sinful, and got them to reduce their claims one half. He then informed the debtors that though they had sinned by gaming, they must keep their promise; so they paid one half. But though Mr. Eliot's purpose was right, the result of this compromise was very harmful.

The penalties of disobedience are sure.—Two servants of a rajah in the East Indies were ordered to keep away from a certain cave in the woods. They speculated much as to the cause of this order, till, at length, unable longer to restrain their curiosity, they rolled away the stone from the cave, and were torn by a tiger.

There are two ways to destroy a steam-engine. It may be shattered by a thunder-bolt; or let dew rest upon it long enough and it will corrode till the engine is a mass of ruins. The one is instantaneous, the other gradual; both complete. So certain and complete the ruin that follows sin.

TEACHING HINTS.

This lesson, like the last one, requires a map: and a rough map drawn in presence of the class is more effective to awaken interest and aid the apprehension than an engraved map exhibited to the pupils. Make a map of Jeroboam's kingdom, embracing the territory of the Ten Tribes. Indicate on it Jeroboam's capital; his frontier fortress; his two idol sanctuaries. Find the earlier events of Scripture associated with these places, and if possible draw out from the class accounts of them. For information, see Josh. 8. 30-35; Gen. 32. 24-32; 28. 10-22; Judg. 18. 29-31.

A line of teaching for the lesson may be found in the sins of Jeroboam, and their results to Israel.

1. **His first sin was following worldly policy.** Ver. 25. Jeroboam thought that a splendid capital and a strong fortress would make his kingdom secure; hence the enlargement of Shechem and the fortifying of Peniel. But the true support of a government is in the loyalty of a godly people. "Why have you no walls around your city?" was asked of a Spartan. "We have a wall of men," was the answer.

2. **Next we find distrust of God.** Vers. 28, 27. God had given the kingdom to Jeroboam, and God would have sustained him in it if he had been faithful. He had the prophets and the promises all on his side. Notice especially 1 Kings 11. 37, 38. But Jeroboam would not trust God. He must needs protect himself by a policy which in the end ruined himself, his family, and the kingdom. "Trust in God and do right," is a motto to be adopted and followed. Many men are like Jeroboam; business men who say, "In trade we cannot afford to be absolutely honest;" politicians who dare not trust to the righteousness of their cause, and law-makers who vote for license to liquor because it appears to cost less than the prohibition of the traffic.

3. **False religion comes next in the catalogue of wrong-doing.** Jeroboam set up a state religion, not because he believed in it, but because the people must have some religion, and he was afraid to have them worship in the old way lest they might return to their old allegiance. He made the church a machine to control the people, not an institution to promote the fear of God and the working of righteousness. Akin to his conduct is that of the merchant who takes

a pew in the church in order to bring trade to his store, or the man who adopts a creed which suits his inclination.

4. **Jeroboam reached a deeper iniquity** when he made priests of the lowest of the people. Ver. 31. He probably took them from all classes, and was not select. "Like priest, like people." A people will never rise above the level of its ministers of religion. If its clergy are low, ignorant, and immoral, the church will become a sink of corruption; and when the church is lower than the people, the tendency of society is rapidly downward. It was said of a certain priest that he was a guide-post, showing the way but never walking in it. There was no hope for Israel's rise when evil men became priests. Applied to the ministry of to-day, no one can deny that it has fewer wicked men than any other profession. Its power is in its purity. We should seek out the best, noblest, brightest of our young men to recruit the ministry, and maintain its high standard.

5. **Notice the last of Jeroboam's sins.** He became a leader in his own false religion; with his own hands offered incense to idols, and corrupted his people. He built his temple on the road to Jerusalem, and established a feast to draw aside from the Lord Jehovah such of his subjects as were religiously inclined. Thus a whole nation was corrupted by his influence. How often he is named as "Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin!" What an epithet to be borne through the ages!

6. **Notice briefly the results of Jeroboam's sins.** He offended God; he ruined his own house, for the throne soon passed out of his family; he led his people into iniquity; and in the end caused the destruction of his kingdom. He might have had a strong throne and sure house by following God; but he lost all by following evil.

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LESSON III.—January 18.

GOD'S CARE OF ELIJAH.—1 KINGS 17. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.—Psa. 34. 10.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

**TIME.**—910 to 907 B. C.**PLACES.**—1. **Samaria**, the splendid capital of the kingdom of Israel, described more at length in the Notes. 2. The brook Cherith, which flowed into the Jordan. 3. **Zarephath**, a Gentile town, in Phenicia, between Tyre and Sidon.**PERSONS.**—1. **Ahab**, son of Omri, King of Israel, a man of vacillating character but securely seated on his throne; he built for himself a famous ivory palace; his wife Jezebel turned the Israelites from the worship of Jehovah to that of Baal. 2. **Elijah the Tishbite**, unique among Hebrew prophets. The chief points in his history are alluded to in our Notes. 3. A widow woman of Zarephath, a Gentile, probably an idolater, but with profound veneration for Jehovah's prophet. 4. The widow's son, who was afterward restored to life by Elijah.**SYNCHRONISMS.**—1. **Asa** was king of Judah. See **CONNECTING LINKS**. 2. **Ethbaal**, father of Jezebel, Queen of Israel, was king of the Zidonians. It was to his dominions (the very stronghold of Baal's worship) that Elijah fled from Ahab.**CONNECTING LINKS.**—Jeroboam, "who made Israel to sin," was succeeded on the throne by his son Nadab. During Nadab's reign Shechem continued to be the capital city. The worshippers of Jehovah emigrated from Israel to Judah, and hostilities prevailed for many years between the rival kingdoms. But the citizens of Judah also sank into idolatry. Jerusalem was besieged by King Shishak, of Egypt, probably the father-in-law of Solomon, and the temple and Solomon's splendid palace were sacked 922 B. C. After a troubled reign of sixteen years, Rehoboam died. His son Abijah made a desperate attempt to reconquer the Ten Tribes, and defeated the forces of Jeroboam in the mountain range of Ephraim with great slaughter. But his reign lasted only three years, and about 956 B. C. his son Asa came to the throne. This distinguished king of Judah prohibited idolatry, instituted a general religious reform, maintained a vigorous government, fortified his frontier towns, defeated the attacks of Zerah of Ethiopia and Baasha of Israel, entered into a solemn covenant with God, and was led by his inveterate hatred of King Baasha into a league with Ben-hadad, King of Syria, against Israel—"the one great blunder of his life." This brings the history of the kingdom of Judah from the date of our last lesson down to the date of the present. Meanwhile, as has been noted, Jeroboam had been succeeded as king of Israel by his son Nadab, a wicked prince who was killed at the siege of Gibbethon by Baasha, a soldier who had risen from the ranks. Baasha was a sturdy character, who usurped the throne, utterly destroyed the royal family, and seems to have maintained incessant warfare against enemies on all sides. In 981 B. C. he died and was succeeded by his son Elah. But there was no royal family now, "anointed of the Lord" and buttressed by splendid traditions, and the throne became a prize for which the most reckless adventurers fought. Elah was hardly on the throne before he was assassinated by Zimri. Zimri reigned seven days, and was destroyed by Omri, who had been Elah's chief captain. Omri was a man of great force. He had defeated his rival at Tirzah and reigned there for a while, but in the latter part of his reign built a capital for himself at Samaria. His son Ahab succeeded him. These Israelite kings were all idolaters.**A MOHAMMEDAN LEGEND.** At Surafend, the ancient Sarepta, stands a sepulchral chapel dedicated to El-Khudr, [Elijah.] There is no tomb inside, only hangings before a recess, because, according to tradition, El-Khudr is not yet dead, but flies round and round the world. Periodically he returns to his former place of refuge. "Every Friday morning there is a light so strong within the chapel that none can enter."—*Stanley*.

Authorized Version.

1 And ^a E-li'jah the Tish'bite, who was of the inhabitants of Gil'e-ad, said unto A'hah, 'As the LORD God of Is'ra-el liveth, before whom 'I stand, 'there shall not be dew nor rain 'these years, but according to my word.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

^a Elijah; Luke 1. 17; 4. 25; Elias.—^a 2 Kings 3. 14.—^b Deut. 10. 5.—^c Jas. 5. 17.—^d Luke 4. 25.

Revised Version.

1 And E-li'jah the Tish'bite, who was 'of the sojourners of Gil'e-ad, said unto A'hah, As the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And the word of the LORD came unto

¹ According to the Sept., of Tishbeh of Gilead.

I. BEFORE THE KING. Verse 1.



1. **Elijah**—Elijah comes suddenly upon the scene; throughout the history his appearances are sudden and brief—*Cambridge Bible*. Introduced like another Melchizedek (Gen. 14. 18; Heb. 7. 3), without mention of father or mother, or the beginning of days—as if he had leaped from that cloudy chariot which, after his work was done on earth, conveyed him back to heaven.—*Doren*. **The Tishbite . . . of the inhabitants of Gilead**—By a very slight change in the Hebrew we may read, *Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbi of Gilead*; and this is the reading of the Septuagint, Chaldee, and Josephus. Some have thought this place identical with the Tishbe mentioned in Tobit i, 2; but that was a town in Naphtali, while this was in Gilead. Elijah was probably called the Tishbite from being a native or resident of a place in Gilead called Tishbi or Tishbeh, of which no other trace is now known. The wild, irregular, Bedouin-like character of much of Elijah's life is in noticeable keeping with his Gileadite origin. The tribes on the east of the Jordan soon fell into the habits of the original Bedouin inhabitants, whose wandering tent life and almost inaccessible mountain fastnesses made them in ancient times what they are now—a people of wild unsettled habits.—*Terry*. **Said unto Ahab**—The prophet appears to have been warning this apostate king how fatal, both to himself and people, would be the reckless course he was pursuing, and the failure of Elijah's efforts to make an impression on the obstinate heart of Ahab is shown by the penal prediction uttered at parting.—*Bible Commentary*. **As the Lord . . . liveth**—He does not come in his own name, nor will the drought be of his bringing. He is but sent as the bearer of Jehovah's word, the word of him whom Israel had forsaken, but who alone was worthy to be called the living God.—*Cambridge Bible*. **There shall not be dew nor rain these years**—Not absolutely, but the dew and the rain should not fall in the usual and necessary quantities. Such a suspension of moisture was sufficient to answer the corrective purposes of God, while an absolute drought would have converted the whole country into an uninhabitable waste.—*Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown*. **But according to my word**—Not uttered in spite, vengeance, or caprice, but as the minister of God. The impending calamity was in answer to his earnest prayer, and a chastisement intended for the spiritual revival of Israel. Drought was the threatened punishment of national idolatry. Deut. 28. 23.—*Bible Commentary*. In Luke 4. 25 and Jas. 5. 17, the duration of the drought in Israel is said to have been three years and six months. By such long-continued want of rain there the neighboring countries must also have been affected.—*Cambridge Bible*.

settled habits.—*Terry*. **Said unto Ahab**—The prophet appears to have been warning this apostate king how fatal, both to himself and people, would be the reckless course he was pursuing, and the failure of Elijah's efforts to make an impression on the obstinate heart of Ahab is shown by the penal prediction uttered at parting.—*Bible Commentary*. **As the Lord . . . liveth**—He does not come in his own name, nor will the drought be of his bringing. He is but sent as the bearer of Jehovah's word, the word of him whom Israel had forsaken, but who alone was worthy to be called the living God.—*Cambridge Bible*. **There shall not be dew nor rain these years**—Not absolutely, but the dew and the rain should not fall in the usual and necessary quantities. Such a suspension of moisture was sufficient to answer the corrective purposes of God, while an absolute drought would have converted the whole country into an uninhabitable waste.—*Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown*. **But according to my word**—Not uttered in spite, vengeance, or caprice, but as the minister of God. The impending calamity was in answer to his earnest prayer, and a chastisement intended for the spiritual revival of Israel. Drought was the threatened punishment of national idolatry. Deut. 28. 23.—*Bible Commentary*. In Luke 4. 25 and Jas. 5. 17, the duration of the drought in Israel is said to have been three years and six months. By such long-continued want of rain there the neighboring countries must also have been affected.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Communion with God gives strength. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The representative of God need never fear. If we can say with Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," we may boldly add, "I will not fear what man can do unto me."

God sends privations to lead us to him. Not every sorrow of our life is a punishment, but every sorrow may be made a means of grace.

Authorized Version.

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jor'dan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

Revised Version.

3 him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before

4 Jor'dan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee

* Ps. 37. 3; Isa. 33. 16.

11. BY THE BROOK. Verses 2-7.

3, 4. Hide thyself—Elijah's escapes from the hands of his enemies, and his departures into unknown places, are faint resemblances of the mysterious vanishings of our Lord after he had



ANCIENT DRINKING VESSELS.

delivered some of those divine messages which excited the anger of the people. Luke 4, 29; John 8. 59; 10. 89. Compare the promise to the Church of God. Rev. 12. 6-14.—*Wordsworth.* By the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan — The rendering gives a fair representation of what was commanded, but the word rendered "brook" is really a torrent bed, a deep ravine down which in rainy times a strong stream flowed, but which at others was nearly if not entirely dry. Such would make a good hiding-place. The situation of Cherith has not been identified. Nor does the description "that is before Jordan" help us. It probably implies that the stream from the ravine emptied itself into the Jordan, and hence the valley looked toward the river. But whether

on the west side or on the east we cannot tell. If the interview with Ahab was in Samaria, and Elijah traveled thence toward the east (Josephus says in contradiction of the text "toward the south") it appears most likely that he crossed the Jordan, and found his retreat in the wilder parts of Gilead, which would be more distant from Ahab and less frequented than any of the ravines in the hill country of Ephraim on the west of Jordan, and with which the prophet would most likely be familiar.—*Lumby.* Dr. Robinson makes it identical with Wady el Kelt, which rises amid the hills of the wilderness of Judea, and runs through the Jordan plain near Jericho. Others have suggested other streams on both sides of the Jordan, but nothing sufficient has been brought forward to settle the question. Local traditions have uniformly placed it west of the river.—*Terry.* Thou shalt drink of the brook—The drought had not yet dried it up, but soon it would do so.—*Cambridge Bible.* I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there—Just as in 13. 28 the appetite of the lion which had slain the false prophet was supernaturally checked, so that he ate neither the

Authorized Version.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass ^b after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Revised Version.

5 there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith,

6 that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the

7 brook. And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

^b At the end of days.

corpses nor the ass, so here the greedy birds were to bring into the valley enough food to suffice for the prophet's wants as well as for their own. Their nests would be in the caves among which Elijah would find his best hiding-place. Many attempts have been made to explain away this verse by substituting "merchants" or "Arabians" for "ravens," for to the Jews the raven was an unclean bird. But Elijah was not told to eat the ravens, and Arabs would not likely be in that neighborhood. Caravans, especially, keep as far away as they can from wild torrent beds.—*Lumby*.

God seeks to make us feel our need of him. He loves us with a love which he has likened in turn to a mother's and a father's and a brother's and a lover's and a husband's, and has declared that all these similes fell short of the truth. And as all earthly lovers long to be of service to those they love, God by both his written word and his providence makes plain his purpose to make us feel our need of him.

God will provide for his servants. So many mill wheels turn for us, so many bargains are driven for us, we are so close to life's secularities, that we are apt to forget that all provisions made for our comfort have been really made by God. He works not more really by ravens in miraculous circumstances than through all the ordinary environments of life. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

God will protect his servants. "Why are ye of little faith?" Christ used to exclaim with astonishment. God's chariots are around us all. "Which of the monarchs of the world can boast a guard like ours?" "Some trust in horses and some in chariots (some in police, or boats, or money, or reputation, or friends), but, like Elijah, we will remember the name of the Lord our God." See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Protection and provision are conditioned on obedience. God has no comforting promises for those who disobey him. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

6, 7. *J. D. Michalitis* explains this verse on natural principles, supposing the brook Cherith to be a place where ravens were wont to congregate, and that Elijah took from their nests morning and evening the young hares and other food which they brought to their young. The text plainly records a miracle—all the more impressive from the fact that the ravens, the most voracious of birds, furnish the prophet his supplies. Since the raven is a carrion bird, and a devourer of all manner of dead flesh, some have wondered how Elijah could eat without scruple all that was brought to him; but they absurdly assume that ravens miraculously sent by divine command would bring what was common or unclean. Alike idle is it to inquire whether they obtained the bread and flesh through Obadiah or stole it from Ahab's kitchen.—*Terry*. **Bread and flesh in the morning and . . . evening**—This is the first account we have of flesh-meat breakfasts and flesh-meat suppers; and as this was the food appointed by the Lord for the sustenance of the prophet, we may naturally conjecture that it was the food of the people at large.—*Clarke*. When men disobey, God reproves them by the obedience of inferior creatures. The old world disbelieved God's warnings by Noah, would not go into the ark, and so perished in the flood; but the inferior animals went in and were fed there. Balaam was rebuked for his disobedience by the ass on which he rode. The disobedient prophet (chap. 18. 26) was slain by the lion which God sent from the forest, and which spared the ass and the carcass of the prophet. Jonah fled from God, and God sent the whale to bring him back to prophecy against Nineveh. The lions spared Daniel when his colleagues would have slain him. Christ was with the wild beasts in peace (Mark. 1. 18) when he was about to be rejected by mankind. Here the disobedience of Ahab and Israel was rebuked by the obedience of the ravenous birds in bringing food to Elijah.—*Wordsworth*. **Because there had been no rain**—Not only had there been none, but the drought was continuing.—*Lumby*. See Revised Version.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
8 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,	8 And the word of the LORD came unto
9 Arise, get thee 'to Zar'e-phath, which <i>belongeth</i> to Zi'don, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.	9 him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zar'e-phath, which belongeth to Zi'don, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.
10 So he arose and went to Zar'e-phath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman <i>was</i> there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, 'Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.	10 tain thee. So he arose and went to Zar'e-phath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow woman was there gathering sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a
11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.	11 vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a
12 And she said, <i>As</i> the LORD thy God liveth, I have not 'a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in	12 morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of

^a Obad. 10; Luke 4. 26; Sarepta.—^b Gen. 24. 1; Ps. 24. 1; Isa. 23. 16; John 4. 7; Heb. 11. 37.—^c Gen. 18. 6.

III. IN THE CITY. Verses 8-16.

9, 10. **Get thee to Zarephath**—Known in later times (Luke 4. 26) as Sarepta. Josephus says it lay between Sidon and Tyre. There the enemy of Baal-worship would hardly be expected to have sought refuge.—*Cambridge Bible*. The former city of Sarepta stood near the sea-shore; the present village, bearing the same name, upon the adjacent hills, has sprung up since the time of the Crusades. The entire plain has been thus abandoned. The ancient site is marked by broken foundations and irregular heaps of stones, with tombs excavated in the adjacent rocks.—*Robinson*. **I have commanded a widow woman**—A source of sustenance hardly less precarious than the supply of the ravens. As in the former case, so here, the command implies that God has prompted her to fulfill his purpose. Elijah has been called, from this event, the first apostle to the Gentiles.—*Lumby*. As the ravens obeyed, unconscious of the divine power that controlled them, so largely did this woman.—*Terry*. **He came to the gate**—An old tradition points out the spot, on the south of the ancient city, where Elijah first saw the widow, and the Crusaders built a small chapel over the reputed spot of the widow's house.—*Terry*. The abject poverty of the widow is seen from her coming forth to pick up any chance bits of wood which might have fallen from the trees outside the city walls.—*Cambridge Bible*.

God chooses unlikely instruments, because "He seeth not as man seeth, for man judgeth by the outward appearance, but God judgeth the heart." Human judgment would hardly have selected the Galilean fishermen as appropriate apostles, or the rough Luther as the great reformer. Let us weigh no spiritual work and measure no spiritual worker by secular weights and measures. The most discouraging cases in your class may be the fullest of hope in God's eyes; and your own least promising efforts may yet prove to be the most successful.

11, 12. **By her language as the Lord thy God liveth she accepts Elijah as a worshiper of Jehovah**. The near neighborhood of Phenicia makes it easy to understand that the worship of Jehovah would be known to the inhabitants, and the woman would recognize an Israelite in Elijah both by speech and dress.—*Lumby*. That she was a heathen, and not belonging to the tribes of Israel, seems evident from the manner in which Jesus speaks of her in Luke 4. 26. It is significant that in the time of famine Elijah finds a home and food in the land of Ethbaal, the father of the wicked Jezebel (chap. 16. 31), and in the house of a poor heathen widow, in whom he finds, as Jesus found in a woman of this land (Matt. 15. 28), a faith unequalled in Israel.—*Terry*. **Barrel**—The word is to be understood as implying an earthen jar; not a wooden vessel, or barrel of any kind. In the East they preserve their corn and meal in such vessels, without which

Authorized Version.

a cruse : and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and ^o die.

13 And E-li'jah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but ^o make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the LORD God of Is'ra-el, "The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD ^o sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went, and ^o did according to the saying of E-li'jah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat ^d many days.

Revised Version.

meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And E-li'jah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of E-li'jah: and she, and he, and her house, did

^o Gen. 21, 15, 16.—¹⁰ 1 Pet. 1, 7.—¹¹ Ps. 84, 7-10, 19; 24, 11; 1 Tim. 4, 8; Phil. 4, 19.—^c Giveeth.—¹² 2 Chron. 30, 20; Matt. 10, 41, 42; 26, 28.—^d Or, a full year.

precaution the insects would destroy them.—*Clarke*. A pitcher, bucket, or jar for holding meal or carrying water. Gen. 24. 14. Cruse — A flask for holding liquids.—*Terry*. The barrel and the cruse were special domestic articles in every house.—*Cambridge Bible*. Two—That is, a few. So two sheep (Isa. 7. 21), and two days (Hos. 6. 3).—*Terry*. Thus we often say "a couple" when we do not mean "two" only.—*Lumby*. Eat it, and die—The drought had already brought this poor woman to the point of starvation.

Our best should be given to God cheerfully.

My gracious God, I own thy right
To every service I can pay,
And call it my supreme delight
To hear thy dictates and obey.

13. Do as thou hast said—That is, set about preparing bread from the meal which remains, but instead of taking first for yourselves bring what is first ready to me.—*Lumby*. It appears that Elijah dwelt afterward in the house of the widow, but at first he waited outside until she made ready the food, which it must have needed much faith to give forth for the supply of the stranger.—*Cambridge Bible*.

God's trial of our faith is caused by His love for us. Our entire success—spiritual and secular—is bound up in our faith. Without confidence in God we must fall; and the "trial of our faith worketh patience," that is, firm and undeviating purpose to live according to the highest ideals.

14. Until . . . the Lord sendeth rain—It is evident the dearth extended to Phenicia, and *Mander* (in *Josephus*) says that in the reign of Ethbaal there was want of rain for a whole year.—*Terry*.

God loveth the cheerful giver. God himself gives constantly. Jesus's example is one of perfect self-abnegation and effort for others. And those who in this selfish world most completely get rid of their selfishness are likest their heavenly Father.

15. She went and did according to the saying—It was one of those sudden recognitions of unknown kindred—one of those cross purposes of Providence—which come in with peculiar charm to checker the commonplace course of ecclesiastical history. The Phenician mother knew not what great destinies lay in the hand of that gaunt figure at the city gate, worn with travel and famine and drought. But she listened to his cry, and saved in him the deliverer of herself and son.—*Stanley*. The whole history of the woman shows that she knew much of the religion of the God of Israel, though we are not told how she had been brought to the knowledge.—*Lumby*.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
16 And "the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake " by E-li'jah.	16 eat <i>many</i> days. The barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by E-li'jah.
¹² Deut. 15. 10; Prov. 11. 24.— ^c By the hand of.	

16. The barrel of meal wasted not—An exhibition of that same divine power that in the person of Jesus of Nazareth multiplied the loaves and fishes.—*Terry*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Communion with God gives strength. Ver. 1.—During the Civil War eleven men and a sergeant were wanted for a specially perilous exploit. The officer intrusted with the selection entered the soldiers' prayer-meeting and took those in the front seats, saying, "I must have the bravest men in the regiment."

When the emperor threatened Chrysostom with exile if he remained a Christian, the latter replied, "Thou canst not; the world is my Father's house!" "But I will slay thee." "Thou canst not; my life is hid with God!" "I will take away thy treasures." "Thou canst not; they are in heaven!" "I will separate thee from thy friends." "I have a Friend from whom nothing can separate me. I defy thee!"

A missionary in Russia was brought before a court official, who informed him, "My imperial master will not consent to the introduction of this system in his dominions." The missionary replied, "My divine Master will not ask leave of any one for the establishment of his kingdom."

Queen Mary feared Knox more than an army of ten thousand soldiers.

*My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure.—Tennyson.*

*Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will prevail to make.—Trench's Sonnet.*

Protecting Providences. Ver. 3.—Heathen poets describe their gods as brooding over the battle, wrapping their favorite hero in a mantle of invisibility, and snatching him away from danger.

John Knox was accustomed to sit at the head of the table with his back to the window. As the result of an impression he left this chair one night and would let no one occupy it. Soon after a bullet grazed the back of the chair and struck the candlestick.

Landing of William III. at Torbay, England. As he sailed down the channel the wind came strongly from the east, turned south as he reached the entrance to the harbor, was calm during disembarkment, and then blew a hurricane which dispersed his pursuers.—*Macaulay*.

At a battle in Flanders King William noticed Godfrey, a London merchant, among his staff. The king said, "You are not a soldier, and ought not to run this hazard to gratify curiosity." "Sire," replied Godfrey, "I run no more risk than your majesty." "Not so," said William; "I am on duty and my life is in God's keeping; but you—" Before the sentence was finished Godfrey was shot dead.

A lady had her attention arrested by a continued tapping on the window-pane. Approaching, she found a butterfly flying back and forth inside the window, and outside a sparrow pecking and trying to get in. The glass was a defense. God is our shield.

*Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above his own.—Lowell.*

Supplies from God. Ver. 4.—Mr. Lawrence, who lived in days of the martyrdom, said he had eleven good arguments against want: a wife and ten children. When asked how he meant to maintain them, he said they must live on Matt. 6, 34.

Mr. Spurgeon says he could no more doubt providential supplies than Elijah while receiving his daily rations from ravens. His orphanage costs \$50,000 annually. Only \$7,000 of this is provided by endowment; the rest comes in answer to prayer.

Said a little boy to his mother, who was very poor, and whom God had wonderfully helped, "Mother, I think God always hears when we scrape the bottom of the barrel."

The celebrated Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, who rose from a lowly position to the highest rank, selected for his motto, "God's providence is my inheritance."

After Mungo Park was robbed of every thing, in Africa, he sat down in despair. Glancing at a bit of moss close by, he thought of God's care even for it, took fresh courage, and soon received ample aid.

I feel as weak as a violet
Alone 'neath the awful sky—
As weak, yet as trustful, also,
For the whole year long I see
All the wonders of faithful nature
Still worked for the love of me.
Winds wander and dews drip earthward,
Rains fall, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
A poor little violet.—*Lowell.*

We ought to obey God. Ver. 5.—A Christian captain of a sperm-whaler refused to allow work on Sunday. When the men rebelled he promised them compensation for the lost day out of his share of oil. The mate threatened to have the captain dismissed, till he saw a sudden fall of the mercury and a hurricane struck the ship. Then he apologized. For days they were driven before the storm, and finally brought to a place where they obtained a cargo in one third the usual time.

"Brethren," said a colored preacher, "if de good God tells me in this blessed book that I must jump troo a stone wall I'm gwine to jump at it. Goin' troo 'longs to God; jumpin' at it 'longs to me."

"I wish I could mind God as my little dog minds me," said a little boy. "He always looks so pleased to mind, and I don't."

A captain coming from the comparatively tideless Mediterranean to a port on the Atlantic coast is told as he anchors at its entrance: Be ready at a certain hour and the tide will bring you in. Though this is against previous experience, and he is in the dark, he obeys. Sails are ready, anchor weighed, and he is floated over the harbor-bar.

"Do you think," asked one of Dr. Morrison, as he started to be a missionary in China, "that you can make an impression on the 400,000,000 Chinese?" "No," he said; "but God can." There are now over 50,000 converts there.

The quality of life may be as perfect in the minutest animalcule as in behemoth. So righteousness may be embodied in the tiniest action I can do, as in the largest done by an immortal spirit. The circle in a gnat's eye is as perfect as that which holds in its sweep all the stars, and the sphere a dewdrop makes is as true as that of the world.—*MacLaren.*

A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. The straight line of righteousness is the easiest way out of all perplexities.

God tries to make us feel our need of him. Ver. 7.—A good man whom God had prospered became the slave of worldliness as riches increased. Severe measures were used. First his wife died, then a beloved son. Still later his crops failed and cattle died, and yet his grasp on the world was not unloosed. Finally, while he lay suffering from a lingering disease, his house took fire, and as he was carried from the burning building he exclaimed, "Blessed be God, I am cured at last."

In prosperity find God in all,
In adversity find all in God.

God chooses unlikely instruments. Ver. 9.—God sets aside America's trained statesmen, and commissions the rail-splitter to be her emancipator; he leaves Erasmus in his scholarship, and calls the singer boy of Mansfeld to liberate Europe; he passes by the dignitaries of England's favorite Church, and among school uahers finds the Spurgeon for the masses. Of many whom God honors it may be said, "I do not doubt that God blesses his work, but I cannot see why."—*Abbott.*

The waves most effectual in shaking asunder the atoms of compound molecules are those of least mechanical power. Billows are incompetent to effect what is readily produced by ripples.—*Tyndall.*

Trial of faith necessary. Vers. 11-14.—When a diamond is found it is rough and dark, like a common pebble. To polish it, it is held close to the surface of a large revolving wheel. Fine diamond-dust is put on this wheel. The work takes months, sometimes years.

A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner.

At the battle of Cressy, Edward, the Black Prince, led the van, while his father looked on from a rising ground. When sharply charged, the youth sent to his father craving immediate assistance. The king replied, "Go tell my son I am not so inexperienced a commander as not to know when succor is wanted, nor so careless a father as not to send it."

When gardeners would bring a rose to richer flowering they deprive it of light and moisture till its leaves drop off and it seems dead. When entirely stripped a new life works in the buds, producing tender foliage and wealth of flowers.—*Mrs. Stowe.*

If the ambitious ore dreads the furnace, the forge, the anvil, the rasp, and the file, it should never desire to be made a sword.—*Beecher.*

Sweet are the uses of adversity.—*Shakespeare.*

The good are better made by ill,
As odors crushed are sweeter still.—*Rogers.*

Generosity receives reward. Vers. 15, 16.—An inscription on an Italian tombstone reads, "What I gave away I saved; what I spent I used; what I kept I lost." "Giving to the Lord," says one, "is but transporting our goods to a higher floor."

Queen Elizabeth requested a merchant to go abroad in her service, and when he mentioned that his business would be ruined, she replied, "You mind my business and I will mind yours."

A Baptist minister walking in Cheapside, London, was appealed to for help. He had but a shilling in the world, and stopped to consider if he ought to give it. The beggar's distress prevailed, and before the minister had gone a hundred yards he met a gentleman, who said, "Ah, Mr. Jones, I am glad to see you. I have had this sovereign in my pocket this week past for some poor minister. Take it." Mr. Jones said, if he hadn't stopped to give the shilling he would have missed the gentleman and the sovereign.

When Mr. Spurgeon was a lad he adopted the principle of giving a tenth to God. Receiving a prize for an essay he wrote, he felt he couldn't give less than one fifth. This has been his rule through life, and to its observance he attributes his prosperity.

It blesteth him that gives and him that takes.—*Shakespeare.*

Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.—*Tennyson.*

Love divine will fill thy store-house or thy handful still renew,
Scanty fare for one will often make a royal feast for two,
For the heart grows rich in giving; all its wealth is living grain.
Seeds, which mildew in the garner, scattered, fill with gold the plain.—*Mrs. Charles.*

TEACHING HINTS.

As an introduction, give a brief account of the kingdom of Israel, and name the first five kings. Notice the downward tendency of the kingdom: from Jeroboam to Ahab; from the worship of the calves to that of Baal; from the toleration of idols to the persecution of the prophets.

In strong contrast with Jeroboam in our last lesson, and in stronger contrast with Ahab in this lesson, stands Elijah, the prophet of the Lord. Draw out from the class a description of his appearance, his garments, manner of life, his character, and his mission.

We may take Elijah as an example of faith in God.

1. It was faith at a time when faith was greatly needed. Ahab and Jezebel on the throne; corruption of morals through the court; priests of Baal and of "the groves" in power; God's altars thrown down; only seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to idols; God's prophets persecuted and slain. In such a time God raised up the most heroic figure in Old Testament history. So appeared a Luther in an age of papal power, and a Wesley in an age of formal religion. Are there opportunities for such heroism now? The boy in a boarding-school who prays when others

scoff around him: the youth in the store who does right when others do wrong; the young lady in society who follows an enlightened conscience when all around her are those who follow the customs of the world—all these may show the spirit of an Elijah.

2. It was **faith inspiring courage**. What courage was needed to stand before an absolute monarch with the word of rebuke and of warning. Call attention to the same trait elsewhere in Elijah's career. Whence came this courage? It was because Elijah had a clear vision of the King of kings. He saw God, and therefore he was not afraid of men. Note an incident which gives the key to Elijah's courage as well as Elisha's. 2 Kings 6. 15-17. He who sees the heavenly and the eternal is bold in the presence of the earthly and the temporal. God-fear takes away man-fear.

3. It was **faith imparting insight**. We may not be able to understand and to define precisely wherein consisted prophetic inspiration. But this we know, that these men lived in constant and close communion with the Most High. They talked with God, and God talked with them. "The secret of the Lord" was revealed to them, and they knew what was hidden from common minds. Hence they could boldly predict future events which God had whispered in their ears, or in some way impressed upon their consciences. Even so now those who live near to God understand his will. We may not be able to foretell the future, but we can interpret the word if we drink deeply at the fountain of divine fellowship. A little cloud will keep the star from the astronomer's sight; a little blur will cause the photograph to fall short of success. So a little neglect of prayer, a little love of the world, will make the eye of a Christian dim in the understanding of the things of God.

4. It was **faith inspiring trust**. A strange command—to trust to the ravens for food, and to trust in a brook for water at the very time when the streams were drying! Stranger still to trust for support to a starving widow, and to find food in an empty barrel! We see Elijah's absolute confidence in God's word, and listen to his bold command to the woman at the gate of Zarephath. The secret of his confidence was his faith in God. He believed in God, and believed that God would care for him while he was in the way of duty. Such trust may not require the great events of a lifetime for its manifestation. The little duties, the small trials, the ordinary temptations of life will afford opportunity for trust in God. Casting all our care on him, whether business care, or household care, or family care, we shall find that he cares for us.

5. It was **faith bringing a blessing**. To the outward eye it would appear that Elijah brought only a heavier burden upon the widow's home, and one more mouth to be fed from her slender store. But in reality faith gave a support, for while the prophet was there the barrel of meal did not waste. And as a greater blessing life came when death had entered that little home. The bread bestowed upon the prophet of God was not in vain. It brought an abundant recompense of reward.

No one is the loser by his faith in God. He shall have an hundred-fold here, and in the world to come everlasting life.

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LESSON IV.—January 25.

ELIJAH AND TAD PROPHETS OF BAAL.—1 KINGS 18. 25-30.

GOLDEN TEXT. How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him.—1 Kings 18. 21.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—Perhaps three years after the last lesson. See ver. 1. According to the New Testament (Luke 4. 25; Jas. 5. 17) these years can hardly be reckoned from the beginning of the drought, for that is said to have lasted for three years and six months. The Jewish tradition reckons this third year to be the third year after the restoration of the widow's son.—*Lumby*.

PLACE.—**Mt. Carmel.** This is a bold bluff promontory, which extends from the western coast of Palestine, at the bay of Acre, for many miles eastward to the central hills of Samaria. It is a long range, presenting many summits, and intersected by a number of small ravines. The spot where the contest took place is situated at the eastern extremity, which is also the highest point of the whole ridge. It is called *El Mohhraka*, "the Burning," or "the Burnt place." No spot could have been better adapted for the thousands of Israel to have stood, drawn up on those gentle slopes. The rock shoots up in an almost perpendicular wall of more than two hundred feet in height on the side of the vale of Esdraelon. This wall made it visible from all the surrounding heights. The conspicuous summit, sixteen hundred and thirty-five feet above the sea, on which the altars were placed, presents an esplanade spacious enough for the king and the priests of Baal to stand on the one side and Elijah on the other. It is a rocky soil, on which is abundance of loose stones to furnish the twelve stones of which the altar was built, a bed of thick earth in which a trench could be dug, and yet the earth not so loose that the water poured into it would be absorbed; two hundred and fifty feet beneath the altar plateau there is a perennial fountain, which, being close to the altar of the Lord, might not have been accessible to the people, and whence, therefore, even in that season of severe drought, Elijah could procure those copious supplies of water which he poured over the altar. The distance between this spring and the site of the altar is so short as to make it perfectly possible to go thrice thither and back again, whereas it must have been impossible, *once* in an afternoon, to fetch water from the sea. The summit is one thousand feet above the Kishon, which nowhere runs so close to the base of the mount as just beneath *El Mohhraka*; so that the priests of Baal could, in a few minutes, be taken down "to the brook (torrent) and slain there."—*Bible Commentary*.

PERSONS.—1. *Ahab*. 2. *Elijah*. (For biographical notes see preceding lesson.) 3. The priests of Baal.

CONNECTING LINKS.—God, who had commanded Elijah to retire to Zarephath, "after many days" directed him to return to Ahab and foretell the coming of rain. Elijah went, passing through a thickly settled country, which suffered the horrors of famine. Meanwhile Ahab had ordered Obadiah, his major-domo, to accompany him on a search for grass and water for the king's horses. Nothing can make more plain the terrible sufferings of rich and poor than this picture of the king himself going forth from his splendid ivory palace on such a miserable quest. In their search Obadiah and the king parted, and "as Obadiah was in the way" he met and recognized Elijah, who directed him to report his presence to Ahab. Obadiah hesitated to do so. Ahab and Jezebel had sought in all directions for the hidden prophet, and this nobleman seems to have been in equal terror of the perfidy and cruelty of the king and of the supernatural force which seemed to reside in Elijah, and which might carry him away before Ahab could arrive. Elijah promised to remain where he was. When Ahab came Elijah commanded him with an authority that the king dared not resent to call together the prophets of Baal and of Asherah, the false male and female divinities which Jezebel had introduced, to Mt. Carmel—a place easy of access, and remarkable in the history of Jehovah-worship from the presence there of an ancient altar. The priests were called together, and Elijah proposed a test of the verity of the

two religions in the presence of the people. Neither the king nor the priests dared refuse, and the incidents of our lesson follow as a result. Elijah's action at Carmel was full of the majestic dignity becoming a messenger of God.

Authorized Version.

25 And E-li'jah said unto the prophets of Ba'al, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning even until noon, saying, O Ba'al, ^ahear us! *there was* ^bno voice, nor any that ^canswered. And they ^aleaped upon the altar which was made.

Revised Version.

25 And E-li'jah said unto the prophets of Ba'al, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of

26 your god, but put no fire under. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning even until noon, saying, O Ba'al, ^ahear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they ^bleaped about the altar which

^a Or, answer. — ¹ Psa. 115. 5; Jer. 10. 5; 1 Cor. 8. 4; 12. 2.
^b Or, heard. — ^c Or, leaped up and down at the altar.

¹ Or, answer. — ² Or, leaped.

I. THE PROPHETS OF BAAL. Verses 25-29.



25, 26.—The pomp and splendor of the priests of Baal, glittering with gorgeous vestments (see 2 Kings 10. 22), would show the more because of the rough, shaggy garb of the Tishbite, from the fastness of Gilead.—*Cambridge Bible*. Choose you one bullock.—Examine and select for yourselves, that there may be no suspicion of false play. Ye are many—See note on "Numbers are Not Every Thing" at close of this paragraph. The significance of fire in sacrifice: it wafts the sacrifice upward, and, as it were, presents it to the Deity. Should God send the fire, it would be a sign not only of power, but that the sacrifice was pleasing. Fire, especially that which came from heaven, was the general symbol of Deity. Baal was supposed to be the god of the sun and of fire, and if he could not consume the offering that would show him to be a pretender.—*Lange*. They took the bullock—The priests of Baal employed the whole day in their desperate rites. From morning until noon was spent in preparing and offering the sacrifice, and in supplication for the celestial fire. At noon Elijah began to mock them, and this excited them to begin anew. They continued till the time of offering the evening sacrifice, dancing, cutting themselves, mingling their blood with their sacrifice, and praying in the most frantic manner.—*Clarke*. Leaped—One part of heathen worship consisted in a dance around the altar, during which the devotees wrought themselves up to a pitch of frenzy. Such was probably the kind of worship of the *Salii*, whom Numa instituted at Rome, and hence their name "Jumpers." The dances of the aborigines of Australia were of much this fashion.—*Lumby*. Such fanaticism may still be seen in Eastern religions. As the Mussulman dervishes work themselves into a frenzy by the invocation of *Allah! Allah!* until the words themselves are lost in inarticulate gasps; as the pilgrims around the Church of St. John formerly, and around the chapel of the Holy Sepulcher more recently, raced, ran, and tumbled in order to bring down the divine fire into the midst of them, so the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal performed their wild dances around their altar or upon it, springing up or sinking down with the fantastic gestures which Orientals alone can command, as if by an internal mechanism, and screaming with that sustained energy which believes it will be heard for its much speaking.—*Stanley*. A heathen priest from Hindostan has just been showing me the way in which they dance and jump, up and down and from side to side, twisting their bodies in all manner of ways, when making their offerings to their demon gods; a person beating furiously on a tom-tom or drum to excite and sustain their frenzy, while they implore the succor of their gods.

Authorized Version.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that E-li'jah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

Revised Version.

27 was made. And it came to pass at noon, that E-li'jah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be

28 awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and launces, till the blood

29 gushed out upon them. And it was so, when midday was past, that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening oblation; but there was neither voice, nor any to answer,

d With a great voice. — *e* Or, he meditated. — *f* Hath a pursuit. — *g* Lev. 19. 28; Deut. 14. 1. — *h* Poured out blood upon them. — *i* 1 Cor. 11. 4. 5. — *k* Ascending. — *l* Attention.

m Or, swords.

They are taught to practice these attitudes from their earliest years, according to directions laid down in religious books. To make the joints and body pliant, much anointing of the parts and mechanical management are used, and they have masters whose business it is to teach these contractions. — *Clarke*.

There was no voice because there was no Baal. Sad, indeed, it is to think how many calls for help have been made to deities who never existed. But our God answers. Millions of Christians all over the world can testify from their own hearts' experience that God answers prayer.

Numbers are not every thing. See ILLUSTRATIONS. A man in the right, with God on his side, is in the majority though he be alone, for God is multitudinous above all the populations of the earth. God is *not* always on the side of the heaviest battalions. There never was a more blasphemous saying than this by Napoleon. But we in our smaller spheres are often tempted to lean far too much to numbers and the outward show of success. — *Beecher*.

Earnestness of itself will not save. See ILLUSTRATIONS. A man's sincerity will not bring him to Chicago if he has taken a through train for New Orleans; and if one is all wrong in his spiritual life the outcome will be all wrong as inevitably as it would be in his secular life. Earnestness does not change direction; it only increases speed.

The folly of spiritual unbelief. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

27, 28, 29. He is a god—So you deem him. Elijah attributed no power to Baal. He merely addresses the priests from their own level, and to make the object of their worship more contemptible attributes to him certain acts and necessities which proclaim him no more powerful than his worshippers. — *Cambridge Bible*. All that Elijah here derisively attributes to Baal must not, however, be regarded as that which Baal's priests actually believed of him as the sun-god (his journey, labors, sleeping), for this had ceased to be a matter of sport. They cried louder (ver. 28), so that Baal, by hearing, might stultify the derision. — *Lange*. **Talking**—Rather, *meditating*. An attempt to picture Baal as so preoccupied by thought as not to hear the loud cries of these frantic prophets. — *Lumby*. **Cried aloud**—The word used for the wild raving of these heathen priests is the same which is employed for the most solemn utterances of the prophets of Jehovah. Comp. Ezek. 37. 10. The thought which connects the two uses seems to be of a person acting under some influence which he cannot control. In both cases the external manifestation was in a degree alike, for Jehovah's prophets were moved at times by great outward excitement. In these Baal-prophets it appears to have been of the nature of raving. — *Lumby*. The dance, as we may infer from its climax, may have had somewhat of the bacchantic, reeling way about it. — *Thinius*. **Knives and lancets**—The former of these nouns is commonly rendered "sword," though it is also used of other instruments for cutting, as of a razor (Ezek. 5. 1) and an ax. Ezek. 26. 9. The second is constantly employed for "spear" in connection with "shield" of a fully armed soldier. The Baal-dance was most likely performed by the chief devotees with weapons in their hands, and with these it was that, in their frenzy, they wounded themselves. — *Lumby*. **The offering of the evening sacrifice**—R. V., *oblation*. The Hebrew word here used signifies that offering

of fine flour mixed with oil, salt, and frankincense, which was the accompaniment at times of sacrifices, but which at times was offered alone. It is generally rendered in the Authorized Version "meat-offering," and the Revised Version has changed this to "meal-offering," that the nature of the oblation might be more nearly described in the translation. "Sacrifice" here is misleading, for the offering was without blood. What is meant to be expressed by the 29th verse is, that though they went on the whole day through, yet there was no result of their cries and lacerations. — *Cambridge Bible*. There is nothing in the Hebrew that answers to evening, which is here supplied by our translators; but the context shows that the evening sacrifice is meant, for from morning until after midday had the priests of Baal kept up their orgies. The evening sacrifice was offered "between the two evenings." *Exod. 29. 39; Num. 28. 4*. This expression also designates the time at which the paschal lamb was killed. The exact hour was disputed even by the ancients. It would seem, from a remark of Josephus (*Antiq.*, xiv, 4, 8), to have been about the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. — *Terry*.



EMBOSSD HEAD OF BAAL.

God is not moved by the quality or quantity of our prayers. A man's sense of his own need is the truest prayer. Baal's worshipers could not be blessed by Jehovah, of course, because they were turning away from him; but their very methods would be offensive to the true God. Not frenzy and excitement and wild wounding by knives—not eloquence or noise ["Lord, Lord;"] "much speaking"]—but the yearning of the human heart is answered of God.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.—*Montgomery*.

Penance is not pleasing to God. When the priests of Baal cut themselves with knives they followed the instinct of human nature which has since led to the Roman Catholic doctrine of penance. But for a "diseased mind" there is no cure to be found in penalties inflicted upon the body. Our proper attitude before our great heavenly Father is that of contrition, and confidence in his love.

Authorized Version.

80 And E-li'jah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down.

81 And E-li'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Ja'cob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, 'Is-ra-el shall be thy name:

82 And with the stones he built an altar in *'the name of the LORD*: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

83 And he *'put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on 'the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.*

84 And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time.

Revised Version.

80 nor any *'that regarded. And E-li'jah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was thrown*

81 down. And E-li'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Ja'cob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Is-ra-el shall be thy name.

82 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain *'two measures*

83 of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on

84 the wood. And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third

⁴ Gen. 22, 26; 25, 10; 2 Kings 17, 24. — ⁵ Col. 3, 17. — ⁶ Lev. 1, 6. — ⁷ Judg. 6, 20.

⁴ Heb. *attention*. — ⁵ Or, a two seah measure.

II. THE PROPHET OF JEHOVAH. Verses 30-39.

80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85. **Elijah said unto all the people**—Very evidently Jehovah's followers were out in full force as well as those of Baal. The prophet called for volunteers to help, and "all the people came near;" that is, there was a general movement of the crowd toward him.—*R. R. D.* **He repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down**—On the top of Carmel had been one of those high places where worship had been paid to Jehovah (after the manner of the worship in the wilderness), until the place which God had chosen became known and the temple built there. The custom of worship at such spots was continued for long after Solomon's date, and Elijah here treats the altar as a specially sacred erection to be restored in Jehovah's honor.—*Cambridge Bible.* The issue of the day was the restoration of the ancient Jehovah-worship. Elijah shows still more explicitly the object of the restoration and the renewal of the broken covenant (chap. 19. 10) in that, as Moses had once done at the conclusion of the covenant (Exod. 24. 4), in like manner he repaired the altar with **twelve stones**. This was a declaration, in act, that the twelve tribes together constituted one people, that they had one God in common, and that Jehovah's covenant was not concluded with two, or with ten, but with the unit of the twelve tribes.—*Bähr.* On a similar preparation for an altar compare the command of Joshua. Josh. 4. 5. Elijah's prayer also recalls the still earlier memories of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.—*Lumby.* **A trench**—To catch the water that was to be poured over the sacrifice, and thus to intensify the effect of this solemn object-lesson. **Two measures of seed**—The measure mentioned is a *seah*, which is the third part of an ephah. But whether the dimension applies to each side of the altar, so that on each of the four sides there would be a ditch of this capacity, or whether this was the capacity of the whole surrounding trench, is not evident.—*Cambridge Bible.* The *seah* is the third part of an ephah; according to Thénius two Dresden pecks; according to Bertheau 861.92, according to Bunsen 838.18, Paris cubic inches.—*Bähr.* **Fill four barrels with water . . . the third time**—The question whence so much water could have been obtained in such a drought cannot shake the trustworthiness of the narrative. It is plain from verse 40 that the brook Kishon was near, and was not dried up. Its supply of water was very abundant. Carmel, moreover, was full of grottoes and caves [*Winer*, "Some say 2,000"], and if there were water anywhere it would be there. *Van de Velde* has proved that the place where

Authorized Version.

35 And the water ¹ ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at ² the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, ³ LORD God of A'bra-ham, I'saac, and of Is'ra-el, let ⁴ it be known this day that thou art God in Is'ra-el, and that I am thy servant, and that ⁵ I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast ⁶ turned their heart back again.

Revised Version.

35 time. And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the

36 trench also with water. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, O LORD, the God of A'bra-ham, of I'saac, and of Is'ra-el, let it be known this day that thou art God in Is'ra-el, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these 37 things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou, LORD, art God, ⁷ and that thou hast turned their heart

¹ West. — ² Exod. 28. 29. — ³ Gen. 28. 13; Exod. 3. 6; 4. 5; Matt. 22. 32; Heb. 11. 16. — ⁴ Chap. 8. 43; 9 Kings 19. 19; Ps. 68. 16. — ⁵ Num. 16. 25. — ⁶ Jer. 10. 23; 31. 18.

⁷ Or, for thou didst turn their heart backward.

the sacrifice was offered is at the ruin El Mohhraka, and that here is a covered spring "under a dark, vaulted roof." The water in such a spring is always cool, and the atmosphere cannot evaporate it. — *Bähr*. The neighboring sea was several miles distant from the traditional scene of this miracle. *Thompson* says that the fountain near the spot which most travelers mention was nearly dry when he was there, and could not hold out through the dry season of one ordinary summer. More likely the water was brought from the "brook Kishon," where Elijah slew the false prophets. This flows close along the base of Carmel, and here is one of the largest perennial sources of that ancient river. We need not suppose that the water was brought at this particular moment, and that Elijah and the people waited by the altar while the carriers brought it from the Kishon, or even from a neighboring fountain. The necessary supply of water was probably provided in the early part of the day. — *Terry*. The solemnity and emphasis with which the prophet commands the soaking with water stamp this act as prophetic—religiously significant; done for some other than the merely negative purpose "of cutting away all ground of suspicion of the possibility of some cheat." — *Keil*. When the prophet orders thrice four cads of water poured upon an altar composed of thrice four stones, the significance of this combination of numbers is unmistakable. The numbers three and four, as well singly as in their combination with each other, in seven and twelve, always had a religious significance to the Hebrew. — *Lange*. He filled the trench also — The twelve barrels had not filled the trench, and so more water was added to make it quite full. — *Cambridge Bible*.

The importance of unity in the service of the Lord. Even Elijah, with miraculous fire at his command, needed the help of "the people." A united church, a united Sunday-school, a united class, will always succeed. It was when the disciples waited "with one accord in one place" that the pentecostal blessing was downpoured. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Avoid the very appearance of evil. The slightest appearance of unfairness or duplicity on Elijah's part would have been fatal to his cause. And this principle applies to all Christian workers of the present day.

36, 37. The time of . . . the evening sacrifice — The preparations of Elijah in building an altar, digging the trench, and preparing the sacrifice, need not have occupied much time, for verses 30, 33, 34, show that he had many people around him at command. — *Terry*. He waited till the usual hour, that his action might be in more accord with the appointed order, and so the people be put in mind of the worship which they had cast aside. — *Lumby*. Elijah came near — The protesting prophet assumed all the functions of the priestly office. And the people would be in no way surprised, for the patriarchal rule, which allowed others than the tribe of Levi to come near to the altar, had hardly become obsolete, as we can see by the action of Solomon. — *Cambridge Bible*. Besides, the Levitical priest was no longer in the kingdom of Israel (2 Chron. 11. 13; 13. 9). — *Lange*. That thou art God in Israel — The Revised Version, "that thou, Lord,

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
88 Then ¹⁸ the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that <i>was</i> in the trench.	88 back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water
89 And when all the people saw <i>it</i> , they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, <i>he is</i> the God; the LORD, <i>he is</i> the God.	89 that was in the trench. And when all the people saw <i>it</i> , they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, <i>he is</i> God; the LORD, <i>he is</i> God.

¹⁸ Lev. 9. 24; Judg. 6. 24; 1 Chron. 21. 26; 2 Chron. 7. 1.

art God," is better. What Elijah desired was that it should be demonstrated that to apply the term *Elohim* to Baal and idols like him was a folly and a delusion. The heathen used this term for their idols, and Elijah, in his mockery, had employed their phrase (ver. 27) and said of Baal, "He is *Elohim*." In the present verse, as in verse 39 below, the noun has the article before it, which is shown by the rendering of the Authorized Version in verse 39, "*he is the God*."—*Cambridge Bible*.

38. The fire . . . fell—It descended from heaven in flaming proof that it was no result of fraudulent practice. *Chrysostom* says he was personally cognizant of fraudulent practices of idolaters whereby fire was kindled on the altar by means of a concealed excavation underneath; and an old tradition says that these priests of Baal had a man hidden under their altar on Carmel, but he was suffocated before he could kindle the fire.—*Terry*. *Dr. A. Clarke* notices the strangeness of the order in which the various articles were consumed as tending to remove the possibility of suspicion that there was any concealed fire: 1. The pieces of the sacrifice were first consumed; 2. The wood next—it was not even by means of the wood that the flesh was burned; 3. The twelve stones; 4. The dust, the earth of which the altar was constructed, was burned up; 5. The water that was in the trench was entirely evaporated; 6. The action of this "fire of Jehovah" was in every case *downward*, contrary to the nature of all material fire. Nothing can be more simple and artless than this description, yet how amazingly full and satisfactory is the whole account. *Dean Stanley* calls attention to the exultant triumph in the words by which the sacred historian describes the completeness of this conflagration: the fragments of the ox on the summit of the altar first disappear; then the pile of wood, heaped from the forests of Carmel; next the stones of the altar crumble in the flames; then the very dust of the earth that had been thrown out of the trench; and lastly, the water in the trench around the altar is licked up by the fiery tongues, and leaves the whole place bare.

Appeal to God is never in vain. Not now, as of old, need we expect, nor should we desire, "answers by fire." All that could be proved by miracles was proved long ago. The world no longer needs signs, much as it may want them. But Jehovah is a God that answers prayer now as then, and any appeal that you may make will be as effective as this of Elijah's.

39. The Lord, etc.—Rather, "*Jehovah, he is the God; Jehovah, he is the God!*" That is, "Baal is not the God; Jehovah alone is the God of Israel."—*Clarke*.

All moral theories and practices must eventually be tested by human experience. One may be confident that he is right when he is deplorably wrong. Not self-confidence, but personal experience is the final test. SEE ILLUSTRATIONS.

What "they said" made no difference except to themselves. Jehovah was as really the God when they said he wasn't as now when they acknowledged him. To deny the truth or to ignore it does not make it any the less true.

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I falter, Truth is so;
That howso'er I fall or range,
Whate'er I do, Truth cannot change.—*Arthur Hugh Clough*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Numbers not every thing. Ver. 25.—*Voltaire*, in his History of Charles XII., says that when the Swedes could marshal a force bearing a proportion to their foes of twenty to a hundred they never despaired of victory.

Sir Charles Napier at the battle of Meeanee defeated thirty-five thousand Beloochees with an army of two thousand, only four hundred of whom were Europeans.

Faraday proved that a drop of dew contains enough electricity to rend a rock asunder.

On a certain occasion General Turenne with a small army attacked the entire forces of Germany. As numbers yielded to valor, a voice shouted "Victory." The general severely checked excitement by ordering "Silence!" and adding, "Our fate is not in our own hands, and we ourselves shall be vanquished if God does not succor us."

Earnestness does not always prevail. Ver. 26.—Can sincerity save the body? Suppose a man fully persuaded that a poison was wholesome food, and he takes the poison. Will sincerity save him? Suppose a man fully persuaded that a certain path will lead him home and, having taken that path, walks on till he comes to a cliff. If he still presses forward, what of earnestness? A shipmaster is steering homeward. He has calculated his course. But from inaccurate instruments or a blunder in figures the course is several points wide of the truth. If, steering by it, he strikes a rock, the sincerity of his belief will not hinder shipwreck. Let a man sincerely believe that seed planted without plowing is as good as with, that January is as favorable for seed-sowing as April, and that cockle-seed will produce as good a harvest as wheat; will it make no difference? A child might as well think to reverse a ponderous marine engine by catching hold of the paddle-wheel as for a man to think of reversing God's moral government through a misguided sincerity.

But faith, fanatic faith, once wedded fast
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last.—*Moore,*

Unbelief is blind.—*Milton.*

The folly of unbelievers. Ver. 26.—A bullet from an Armstrong gun travels four hundred yards in a second. It would take it thirteen years to reach the sun, and the sound of the explosion would reach it half a year later. In other words, the voices of those men who prayed to the sun would have reached their god in thirteen and a half years if there was an atmosphere to convey the sound.—*Professor Proctor.* How foolish, then, to depend on "much speaking!" It is a spiritual "atmosphere" through which prayers ascend to God.

It takes more credulity to be an unbeliever than belief to be a Christian. What absurdities men accept in renouncing religion! A young man once boasted in the presence of a Quaker that he would believe in nothing but what he could see. "Friend," said the Quaker, "did thee ever see thy brains?" "No." "Does thee think thee has any brains?"

Will it stand the test? Vers. 25-29. A man came to the Duke of Wellington with a patented article. "What have you to offer?" "A bullet-proof jacket, your grace!" "Put it on." The inventor obeyed. The duke rang a bell and said to his servant, "Tell the captain of the guard to order one of his men to load with ball cartridge." The inventor disappeared and never returned.

In crossing the Atlantic Wesley encountered a terrible storm. The sea broke over the ship from stem to stern and dashed through the cabin windows. The air blazed with lightning. The mastsail was torn to tatters and the companion way swept away. While others were screaming with terror, the Moravians calmly continued singing. Wesley asked one of them, "Were you not afraid?" "I thank God, no!" "But were not your women and children afraid?" "No, our women and children are not afraid to die!" That sort of religion stood the test of danger. Wesley did not rest till he found it.

False confidences and hopes deceive men. Vers. 26-29.—In 1696 Henry Winstanley built a fantastic structure on the site of the present Eddystone light-house. Confident in its strength, he wished that he might be in it in the roughest hurricane that ever blew. He got his wish. In November, 1703, he and his workmen were in it during a terrible tempest. Next morning there was no trace of him or them, and the only visible vestige of the wall was a twisted iron bolt.

Before Waterloo Napoleon exclaimed, "At last I have caught them." He was mistaken.

"I was too certain," was the sad ejaculation of Captain Williams, of the ill-fated *Atlantic*, in which hundreds of lives were lost.

A Portuguese merchant, as his vessel got toward the close of a perilous voyage with vast wealth on board, profanely remarked: "Now God himself cannot make me poor." Soon after the vessel struck on a rock and was wrecked. His life was spared, but all his wealth lost.

A bridge at Bath was in so crazy a condition that cautious persons dreaded to cross it. One day a lady hurrying home forgot its ruinous state till close at the bridge. Loss of time and fatigue would be involved in going round. While hesitating, a lucky thought occurred to her. She called for a sedan chair and was carried over in that conveyance! Every one who heard of it laughed. But she was not more absurd than those who, fearing that their moral conduct cannot be trusted to save them, call for priestly rites and ceremonies to carry their souls safely over the stream of death.

They feed upon themselves, and grow most rapidly without other food.—*Spurgeon*.

Frenzy, heresy, and jealousy, these three
Seldom or never cured be.

Bravery in the right. Ver. 27.—At the time of Henry VIII.'s neglect of Queen Anne Boleyn for Jane Seymour the bishops brought their New-year's gifts to court. Some brought gold, others costly valuables. But Bishop Latimer presented a New Testament with a napkin having this motto on it: "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

On the 10th of December, 1590, Luther erected a funeral pile at Wittenberg. When the members of the University and inhabitants of the city had crowded around, Luther came with several volumes, decretals of the Popes, writings of Ecceus and Emser, and a copy of the bull of Pope Leo X. Setting the pile on fire he committed the books to the flames, exclaiming, "Because ye have troubled the holy of the Lord ye shall be burned with eternal fire."

On a very cold night a gate-keeper at a railway depot demanded that each passenger show his ticket. Several bitterly complained of the delay and inconvenience. "You are a very unpopular man to-night," said a spectator. "I only care to be popular with one man," he replied "that is the superintendent." If we are in favor with God we can afford to face human enmity.

The importance of unity. Ver. 30.—It is common in Africa for the serpents to ascend the trees and take the young birds and the eggs from the nests. You will see birds collect together of different hues, characters, and sizes, from the water-wagtail to the hawk, all assembling to scream and roar so as to get the serpent to descend.—*Moffatt*.

On the day before the battle of Trafalgar Nelson took Collingwood and Rotherham, who were at variance, to a spot where they could see the fleet opposed to them. "Yonder," said the admiral, "are your enemies; shake hands and be good friends."

As the spokes of a wheel come nearer to each other as they approach the center, where pressure will be most felt, so common emergency should draw good men into closer union.—*D*.

A number of tiny brooklets would be of little use to turn a mill; but let all the water be turned into one channel, and concentration will tell.

All your strength is in your union,
All your danger is in discord.—*Longfellow*.

"You do no work," said the scissars to the rivet. "Where would your work be," said the rivet to the scissars, "if I didn't keep you together!"

Prayer and great emergencies. Ver. 36.—The city of Binghamton is supplied with water by machinery. An engine pumps water into the mains from the Susquehanna night and day. The demand for water regulates the motion of the engine, so that the more water is wanted the faster it goes. When a fire occurs an alarm bell is rung, the engineer gears on extra machinery, which causes the engine to move more rapidly and charges the ordinary mains to their fullest capacity, so that they can send water to the top of the highest building in the place. Now, if men can construct an engine whereby, through already existing channels, an emergency of prayer can be met, why cannot God do the same in this machine of the universe!—*Taylor*.

At the time the Diet of Nuremberg was held Luther was earnestly praying in his dwelling, and at the very hour when the edict granting free toleration to Protestants was issued he ran out of the house crying, "We have gained the victory!"

During the War of Independence, while the army lay at White Plains, a farmer residing near the camp heard a moaning noise one morning at sunrise. It proved to be the voice of a human being in prayer. The farmer hid till this man of God came forth from his hiding-place. It was George Washington. The farmer said to his wife: "Martha, we must not oppose this

cause any more. I have heard Washington pour out such prayers for it that I know they will be answered."

The prayer may be only a whisper, yet it cannot die away; nothing can prevent it reaching its destination. It passes beyond suns and stars to God's presence-chamber. Amid ceaseless strains of praise that whisper reaches his ear, touches his heart, and moves his arm. It brings forth troops of angels, and sets in motion trains of events.

More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.—*Tennyson*.

A victory for truth. Ver. 38.—Truth will be uppermost some time or other, like cork though kept down in water.

A rejected millstone was thrown into a field. An oak grew through the hole in the center till it filled the hole and raised the stone some inches from the ground. The problem was whether the stone would burst or the tree die. At length, in a storm, the stone gave way and the tree lived. So living truth will eventually rid itself of all error.

"We trust the Lord is on our side, Mr. Lincoln," said the speaker of a delegation to the President during the civil war. "I do not regard that so essential as something else," replied Mr. Lincoln. They looked horror-struck till he added, "I am more concerned to know that we are on the Lord's side."

Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error wounded writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers.—*Bryant*.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. Connecting Links.—In advance of the lesson, request each pupil to read carefully the account of Elijah's re-appearance after three years of absence. Find the story of three meetings:

1.) *The meeting of Elijah and Obadiah.* Note the character of Obadiah, a good man in a strange place.

2.) *The meeting of Elijah and Ahab.* Observe that Ahab was influenced by the stronger will, and was controlled by Jezebel and by Elijah in turn.

3.) *The meeting of Elijah and the people.* The place; the two altars; the two sides; on one side eight hundred, on the other side one.

2. The Prophets of Baal.—Briefly describe the Baal-worship; its origin, introduction to Israel, and characteristics. Its worst trait was the deification of lust and passion. The most abominable immoralities were practiced around its altars in the name of religion. Compare with this the similar facts in modern heathen customs. Notice in this account:

1.) *The folly of idol-worship.* How absurd these cries to a god that could not hear them! See Psa. 115. 1-8, and Isa. 44. 10-20.

2.) *The self-tortures of idolatry.* Compare the conduct of Hindu worshippers, suspending themselves on hooks, casting themselves under the car of Juggernaut, etc.

3.) *The uselessness of idol-service.* "There was neither voice nor any to answer." Ver. 29. How vain the dependence upon any power save that of the true God!

Bishop Foster relates a remarkable conversation with the keeper of an idol-temple in India. He asked, "What are these images of stone?" "They are our gods," was the priest's answer. "Do you pray to them?" "Certainly, they are our gods." "Can these images hear any thing, or do any thing for you?" "O no, of course they cannot." "Have they any life?" "Certainly not." "Why, then, do you worship them?" "Because they are our gods."

A word of application might be given in behalf of the cause of missions, which seeks to give to the heathen the knowledge of the one true God.

3. The Prophet of God.—How strong the contrast between Elijah and these votaries of the false gods! We may well take the great prophet, as presented in this lesson, as our example:

1.) *In decision.* See the GOLDEN TEXT. There was a warfare between Jehovah and Baal, between good and evil, between God and Satan. Elijah had chosen his side, and he was willing to have all Israel know where he stood on the question of the hour.

Such decision is needed in this age, when the Church and the world walk in all too close relationship.

2.) *In courage.* How hard it is to stand alone! Elijah was standing alone, and he felt it keenly. Ver. 22. Yet in presence of the idolaters, of the king, and of the people, he did not falter. He made his bold proposal (vers. 23, 24), and uttered his stinging sarcasm (ver. 27).

There is a picture entitled, "Christ, or Diana?" which represents a young girl standing by a heathen altar. A priest is holding out of her a censor, and a row of idol worshippers are watching to see whether or not she receives it. She is making her choice between throwing a handful of incense on the altar, and going to prison and to death. Her face shows a calm determination. There is no doubt what her decision will be.

3.) *In faith.* The inspiration of Elijah's conduct was his faith in God. Notice his absolute confidence in the result as he builds the altar and digs the trench and piles up the wood and lays upon it the offering and pours over all the water. He knows full well that God will respond to his faith and give it an abundant recompense of reward.

We may not be called to such high deeds as this, but in our daily life we can show the same complete trust in God by a faithful obedience to his will.

4.) *In prayer.* Notice the prayer of Elijah before his altar. It is reverent, direct, brief, and ardent—a model of prayer for us all; and when we reflect that it was offered before an altar on which lay the slain offering, we see that it was offered "in Christ's name."

Let us pray in such a spirit, and ours shall be an answer as glorious.

4. *The result*—Describe the scene of the fire descending from the Lord, or, what is better, call it forth from the class.

Notice the surrender of the people, as they accept Jehovah as their God. Urge such a submission and surrender upon all who yet remain halting between two opinions.

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2. **TO SERMONS AND ADDRESSES**—*Trial and Triumph of Faith*, GUTHRIE. *Speaking to the Heart; How Long Halt Ye?* MOODY. *Halting between God and the World*, H. E. MANNING. *Elijah's Appeal to the Undecided*, SPURGEON, 8-179. *Elijah's Sacrifice*, JOHN FOSTER, i, 206. *Ahab and Elijah*, MACLAREN, i, 222. *What Altars Have We?* JOHN HALL. *Elijah*, BEECHER, *Plymouth Pulpit*, 10, 477. A. P. STANLEY, *Addresses and Sermons in America*, 172.

LESSON V.—February 1.

ELIJAH AT HOREB.—1 KINGS 19. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee.—Gen. 28. 24.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—Immediately following the last lesson; about 906 B. C.

PERSONS.—1. Ahab. See note on PERSONS, Lesson III., First Quarter. 2. Jezebel. See comments on Lessons III. and IV., First Quarter. 3. Elijah. See Lessons III. and IV., First Quarter. 4. Hamael. An officer of Benhadad, king of Syria, whom he afterward slew and succeeded on the throne. 5. Jehu. An officer under Ahab, Ahaziah and Jehoram, who afterward became king of Israel. See Lesson II., Second Quarter. 6. Eliahah.

A husbandman of Abel-meholah who succeeded Elijah in the prophetic office, and equaled his great master in fame. See the last five lessons of this Quarter.

PLACES.—1. Beersheba. A city on the south frontier of Palestine. From it the desert swept to Arabia and Egypt. 2. Horeb. Sinai, where the law was given to Moses. 3. The wilderness of Damascus. 4. Syria. 5. Abel-meholah. A place in or near the valley of the Jordan; perhaps the spot now occupied by the ruins of *Khurbet, ash-Shuk*.—*Whitney*.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The last lesson ended with the triumphant vindication of Elijah and Elijah's God by the descent of the fire of the Lord on Carmel. It consumed the victim, licked up the water, and devoured the wood, stones, and dust. The people at once recognized and worshiped the true God. Elijah acted not only as high-priest, but as vizier, and, doubtless by divine direction, ordered the execution of the official representatives of Baal's corrupt worship. Turning to the king, who seems to have been overpowered by what he had witnessed, he told him to return to his palace and feast, for the drought and famine were over. He then went to the top of Carmel and flung himself before God in prayer. "His thoughts were more high than his body was low." He prayed, sending his servant seven successive times to look toward the sea. At length a little cloud, "like a man's hand," arose in the distant west. The prophet sped down the mountain-side, and, starting before the king's chariot, ran to the entrance of the royal city. His precise purpose in this action is not very plain. He was doubtless for the moment the idol of the people, and some public act of loyalty may have been necessary to prevent turbulence.

LESSON STATEMENT.—The weak-minded king told the strong-minded queen what Elijah had done. "It is well that Jezebel could not keep her own counsel. Her throat preserved the man she meant to kill." Elijah fled to the wilderness and prayed God that he might die. An angel strengthened him by miraculous food, and God in the most wonderful way revealed himself to him, gave him instructions for the close of his life, and encouraged him by the marvelous statement that seven thousand uncorrupted men still worshiped Jehovah.

Authorized Version.

1 And A'hab told Jez'e-bel all that E-li'jah had done, and withal how he had slain¹ all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jez'e-bel sent a messenger unto

Revised Version.

1 And A'hab told Jez'e-bel all that E-li'jah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with

2 the sword. Then Jez'e-bel sent a

¹ Chap. 18. 40.

I. THE FLIGHT. Verses 1-8.

1, 2, 3. Ahab told Jezebel.—He told his wife in general "all that" Elijah had done, and specially "all, how he had slain," etc.—*Lumby*. Jezebel sent.—The sense of the message is evidently this: "If thou art still here to-morrow at this time the same thing shall be done to thee as thou hast done to my priests."—*Bähr*. Her object was to terrify and drive him away; she

Authorized Version.

E-li'jah, saying,¹ So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by ² to-morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Be'er-she'ba, which *belongeth* to Ju'dah, and left his servant there.

Revised Version.

messenger unto E-li'jah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this 3 time. ¹ And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Be'er-she'ba, which belongeth to Ju'dah, and left his servant there.

² Ruth 1. 17; chap. 20. 10; 2 Kings 6. 21.—3 Prov. 27. 1.

¹ According to some ancient authorities, *And he was afraid, and arose.*

feared to cope with him otherwise lest her own fate should be like that of her own false prophets. —*Terry.* So let the gods do—One of those tremendous vows which mark the history of the Semitic race, both within and without the Jewish pale, like the vow of Jephthah, of Saul, of Hannibal.—*Stanley.* She swears, by those gods of hers which were not able to save their prophets, that she will kill the prophet of God who had scorned her gods and slain her prophets. —*Bishop Hall.* Went for his life—Since he did not as on a former occasion (chap. 18. 1) receive a divine command to hazard his life by remaining, he left the kingdom.—*Lange.* Came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah—Beer-sheba was in the tribe of Simeon (see Josh. 19. 2), though in 15. 28 it is included among the uttermost cities of Judah. "Which belongeth to Judah," signifies, "is part of the kingdom of Judah." Elijah had thus escaped from Ahab's dominions. This phrase shows that the writer of this narrative was an Israelite.—*Cambridge Bible.* This being at the southernmost extremity of Canaan, and under the jurisdiction of the king of Judah, he might suppose himself in a place of safety.—*Clarke.* Left his servant there—The servant (according to Jewish tradition the son of the widow of Zarephath) must have attended him from Carmel to Jezreel, and to the south of Judah. The prophet now desires solitude, and so dismisses him. In spiritual communion with God no companion is desired. Even Jesus himself said to his disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder." Matt. 26. 36.—*Lumby.*

Men must take the consequences of their actions, whether good or bad. Ver. 2. Jezebel's vengeance came apparently as a surprise to Elijah; but he might have expected it. Whether he had decided for Jehovah, or for Baal, or had "trimmed" and evaded decision, the consequences would have been inevitable. And so it is to-day. The youths in our classes are deciding for God, or against him, or are postponing their decision. In any case they are sowing, and they will certainly reap the harvest that they sow.

Persecution for righteousness' sake may be expected. Ver. 2. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Jesus especially foretold this, and it would be hard to tell whether the truth of his declaration has better illustration in the Bible history that preceded it or in our own every-day lives. But there is a special blessing pronounced upon those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Passion frequently blinds men to their own interests. Ver. 2. See ILLUSTRATIONS. If Ahab and Jezebel had only known it, Elijah was their best friend. In place of driving him away they should have sought a league with him at once. Every law that God has laid down is really for the best secular as well as eternal interest of man. But our passions often prevent us seeing this truth.

Reformers must expect to suffer. Ver. 2. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The world never lets a man give it a boon without first giving him a buffet. All those rosy philosophers who go dancing along the ways of life, expecting to reform men through ease and pleasure, and are surprised when snow-balls are thrown at them, then icicles, then avalanches, would better fold their gauzy wings at once.—*Beecher.* This is as true of inconspicuous lives and amid narrow limitations as in the public places of the earth.

Prudence is sometimes better than valor. Ver. 3. See ILLUSTRATIONS. See Christ's direction to his disciples. Caution—what is generally called worldly wisdom—would save many a social misunderstanding and many a church quarrel. Let us seek detailed guidance from Providence, and we will move neither too fast nor too slow.

Solitude is often a means of grace. Probably no human counsel could have taught Elijah as much at this juncture as he learned on his silent day's journey south of Beer-sheba. When earthly friends fail us we have the eternal Friend left. But we should not wait for disaster before we consult him. He is a "very present help in time of need."

Authorized Version.

4. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a

Revised Version.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am

5 not better than my fathers. And he lay down and slept under a juniper-tree; and, behold, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was at his head a cake baken

^a Num. 11. 15; Jon. 4. 2, 8.—^b For his life.—^c Ps. 34. 7; Heb. 1. 14.

^d Or, broom.

4. **The wilderness**—The desert of Paran, through which the Israelites had of old wandered from Egypt toward the Promised Land.—*Lumby*. It is a wide expanse of sand-hills, covered with broom shrubs, whose tall and spreading branches, with their white leaves, afford a very cheering and refreshing shade. **A juniper tree**—The Hebrew says literally *one* juniper tree, or rather, broom shrub, and thus depicts the desolation of the country. It was stout enough to be used for fuel (Psa. 120. 4), and in time of famine its roots could be eaten. Job 30. 3, 4. The last quoted passage marks it as a tree growing in the wilderness.—*Cambridge Bible*. It is the most longed-for and most welcome bush of the desert, abundant in beds of streams and valleys where spots for camping are selected and men sit down and sleep, in order to be protected against wind and sun.—*Robinson*. Requested . . . that he might die—He had probably thought that the miracle on Carmel would have been the means of effecting the conversion of the whole court and of the country.—*Clarke*. But now he sees that the influence of Jezebel is as strong as ever, and the result is deep despondency and a longing to be removed from the struggle.—*Lumby*. Nevertheless the moral lessons of the scene at Carmel have never been lost. Though failing to reform the king and the nation, they speak to every after age, and form a part of that divine revelation which claims the admiration and reverence of all that desire to know and worship the true God.—*Terry*. It is enough—"I have now lived long enough." Take away my life—Strange contradiction. Here the man who was destined not to taste of death fees from death, on the one hand, and seeks it on the other.—*Killo*. I am not better than my fathers—Elijah had probably reached a ripe age, and, thinking his labors all fruitless, he prays for removal. While there was work to be done and hope of success he was a willing servant; but in the dark moment of seeming failure his natural feeling of having wrought no reform wrings from him the cry in the text.—*Lumby*. To what degree his dejection was blameworthy it would be presumptuous to decide.

Good people meet great reverses. Ver. 4. Jesus contradicted the old notion that misfortune is a punishment for the sufferer's misdeeds. God's dealings with us here are educational, for our lives are probationary, and it is never to be assumed that a man is right because he is successful, or wrong because he is unfortunate. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Despondency may arise from physical causes. Ver. 4. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It often does, and nothing is unseemly then to test one's Christian life by one's feelings.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.—*Mote*.

The indulgence of gloom is wrong. "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord!" This call is issued to all those who, like Elijah, lodge in caves and dens. The caves, however, are of various kinds. Our heart is a cave, a dark tomb. . . . The soul attacked and tormented by doubts is in a cave. . . . Bodily distress and external affliction may be called a cave.—*Krummacher*.

5, 6, 7, 8. **An angel**—Probably in the form of a young man clothed in white. This was the usual appearance of messengers from the heavenly world. **A cake baken on the coals**—Baked after a manner still common in the East, on smooth stones heated by coals of fire. Whether these provisions were prepared immediately by the angel, or by some traveler whom God led that way,

Authorized Version.

cruse of water at his ^bhead. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat ^aforty days and forty nights unto ^bHo'reb the mount of God.

Revised Version.

on the ^ccoals, and a cruse of water. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Ho'reb the mount of God.

^a Belster.—^b Exod. 34. 28; Deut. 9. 9, 18; Matt. 4. 2.—
^c Exod. 3. 1.

^c Or, hot stones.

we need not discuss, for either was possible. He who commanded the ravens to feed this prophet at the brook Cherith might easily have put it into the heart of some passing Arab to leave the cake and the cruse of water at his head as he slept under the *rothem* shrub.—*Terry*. **Cruse**—See Note on Verse 12, Lesson III. **The journey is too great for thee**—No mention has yet been made of the distance or place to which Elijah meant to go. He appears to have made no preparation for a journey, but to have started without any store of food. He may now have been directed to Horeb. No place was so suitable for a divine communication as that which was hallowed by God's appearance unto Moses.—*Cambridge Bible*. **In the strength of that meat**—As Moses had been forty days on Sinai and had taken no food with him, so now Elijah, who was to be in many ways a counterpart of Moses, is divinely sustained by the food which had been supplied to him while he rested. The fasting of Jesus at the time of his temptation lights up these Old Testament histories, which were meant to preach to former ages the lesson which the Lord emphasizes, "Man shall not live by bread alone."—*Lumby*. **Forty days and forty nights**—A great deal has been written to show that the journey from the edge of the wilderness of Paran to Mt. Horeb could not have occupied forty days, even of very slow walking. [Beer-sheba is not more than forty geographical miles from Horeb; and to Kadesh-barnea, which is situated somewhat to the south, was counted eleven days' journey. Deut. 1. 2.] But there is nothing in the verse to make it necessary to suppose that the writer intended such a sense. Elijah was wandering in despondency and seeking to hide himself. The time spent was not what was required for the journey only, but far more in meditation and prayer, and seeking from God a reason why all the toiling and testimony, which the prophet had bestowed, had proved so unproductive. The spiritual conflict of Elijah prefigures the spiritual conflict of Jesus. **Unto Horeb the mount of God**—So called because, above all other places, it was distinguished by God's manifestations of his power and glory.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Angels of God are continually sent with messages of good cheer for the needy. Ver. 5. Nor need we doubt this because we never see their celestial beauty, nor hear the rustle of their wings. Every event in life, harsh or tender, is a forth-putting of the tireless providence of God. The man of faith cannot for one moment entertain the thought of any possible mischance, accident, or fortune. All forces—spiritual, mental, and physical—are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

There let the way appear
Steps unto heaven;
All that thou sendest me
In mercy given—
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to thee.—*Mrs. S. F. Adams*.

Common sense is the handmaid of religion. Ver. 8. The old adage says that art is, but art has never done a tithe of the good that plain and homely common sense has done. Elijah's first duty now was to sleep and eat. Many an enthusiastic worker would have prolonged his life many years had he had as much common sense as piety. Though one keep all the laws of God but the hygienic laws, if he break them he forfeits the good results that he had otherwise earned. The angel's advice to Elijah on this occasion and Paul's advice to his companions on the eve of their shipwreck, to care for their physical strength, were in harmony with great principles that Christians should bring to bear in their own daily lives.



MOUNT HOREB.

Authorized Version.

9 And he came thither ^a unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

10 And he said, 'I have been very "jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Is'ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, "and slain thy prophets with the sword; and "I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Revised Version.

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here,

10 E-li'jah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the children of Is'ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life,

^a Exod. 23. 9; Heb. 11. 24.—^b Rom. 11. 2.—^c Num. 25. 11; Ps. 69. 9; 119. 129.—^d Chap. 18. 4; Matt. 23. 31-35.—^e Chap. 18. 12; Rom. 11. 2.

II. THE VISION.—Verses 9-14.

9, 10. *Unto a cave*—Hebrew, *unto the cave*. It is likely that by Elijah's time tradition had fixed on a definite place as that "cleft of the rock" in which Moses stood (Exod. 33. 22) when Jehovah passed by. Such a place would be deemed sacred. Some have suggested that the cave had already become a resort of pilgrims to Horeb, but for this there appears no evidence.—*Lumby*. There is nothing to confirm, but there is nothing to contradict, the belief of the Arabs that it may have been in that secluded basin which has long been pointed out as the spot, beneath the summit of what is called the mount of Moses. The granite rocks inclose it on every side, as though it was a natural sanctuary. No scene could have been more suitable for the vision which follows.—*Stanley*. *What doest thou here?*—A question of tender kindness, to relieve the full burdened heart of the prophet. So the Saviour, after his resurrection, asked Mary, as she stood at the grave and wept: Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?—*Menken*. The question here must have a different force from that which it bears after the manifestation of God's presence in verse 18. Here it signifies "Why art thou cast down?" "Has thy knowledge of Jehovah gone no farther than to see him only in works of vengeance?"—*Cambridge Bible*. If a censure were to be inflicted on Elijah, it would not have been delayed until now, but would have been given when he had fled a day's journey into the wilderness (ver. 4) and longed to die; but instead of this he was tenderly encouraged by an angel and wonderfully strengthened, in order to be able to continue the journey still farther.—*Lange*. *I have been very jealous*—Or, *loyal*. There is no boastfulness in these words. Elijah only opens his grief, and sets forth that he has done his utmost, but that, in spite of all, both king and people are unrepentant.—*Lumby*. He mentions his own person and his own need only in so far as they stood in necessary and most intimate connection with the cause of God and the truth, and so his complaint was a holy one.—*Menken*. *The children of Israel*—Public opinion was led by a foreign-born queen; but, rightly, Elijah charges the nation with these crimes. *Forsaken thy covenant*—The portion of the covenant here referred to is Exod. 20. 8, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." Forsaking the covenant is the same as forsaking God. *Thrown down thine altars*—Acceptable sacrifices had been offered to God in more places than one. In 18. 30, the altar of Carmel is called "the altar of the Lord that was broken down." And there were probably many similar ones. *I only, am left*—Elijah speaks according to his own knowledge. No one had stood with him on Carmel. His words on that occasion (18. 22) are the same as here.—*Cambridge Bible*. We are inclined to the favorable view of Elijah's conduct held by the commentators already quoted, but *Dr. Terry* takes another view. He says: This answer of Elijah betrays in him what some have called a "spirit of faultfinding," and also a disposition to exalt himself above measure. He does not accuse Jehovah, but his words imply that he himself was the only saint in Israel, and it was too bad that divine power had allowed idolatry so far to triumph. Elijah's notions of the divine government were manifestly shaped too much by external displays of awful power, and he needed to learn a profounder lesson of the divine nature. This we must observe in order to understand the significance of the symbolic events that follow.

Authorized Version.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was so, when E-li'jah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

Revised Version.

11 to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when E-li'jah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here,

¹¹ Exod. 24. 12. — ¹² Ezek. 1. 4; 37. 7. — ¹³ Num. 14. 18; Neh. 9. 17; Job 4. 16; Psa. 84. 15; 103. 5-18; 111. 4; 145. 5; Jas. 5. 11. — ¹⁴ Exod. 3. 8; Isa. 6. 2.

⁴ Heb. a sound of gentle stillness.

Greatness has its penalties. Ver. 10. Most men standing with their feet on a low round of the ladder of life earnestly desire to reach the top; but probably no man ever stood on the top round, or near it, but he often wished to be nearer the ground. The higher one goes the more his responsibilities and possibilities of failure increase, and the more disastrous failure becomes. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

God's sympathy never fails. Ver. 9. Elijah needed some one to confide in, and he probably did not know a single trusty soul in all Israel. God bends down like a loving father, and says, "Tell me all about it! Why have you come here?" Equally sympathetic are the ministrations of the divine Spirit to-day.

The moral responsibility of a bad leader does not diminish the responsibility of his followers.

Ver. 9. To our own Master each of us stands or falls. Apply to politics, to business life, to social prejudices and customs, to the every-day life of our scholars.

11, 12, 13, 14. Go forth—Elijah does not go forth (see ver. 13) until he recognizes the presence of the Lord in the still small voice. The violence of the wind and the earthquake and the devouring fire, he was made to feel, were not those tokens by which Jehovah would be known to his people, and consequently he abode still in the cave while they were raging. The Lord had not yet appeared.—*Cambridge Bible*. The meaning of this revelation is that Jehovah, in his own innermost being, is not a destroying, annihilating God, but rather a quickening, saving, preserving, gracious, and faithful God.—*Lange*. And, behold, the Lord passed by—The particular form of the verb (literally, *is passing by*) seems to require a modification of the translation. What is meant is, "The Lord is about to pass by, and you shall be able to recognize something of his true character, and to gain the instruction which you need." The words really belong to the preceding clause, and must be connected with the command to go forth, which the prophet obeyed when he found in which manifestation it pleased the Lord to be present. The narrative of what occurred begins with the words, "And a great and strong wind," etc.—*Lumby*. As the wind, the earthquake, and the fire were only the forerunners of the still small voice, which proclaimed the benignity of the Father of spirits; so the law and its terrors were only intended to introduce the mild spirit of the Gospel of Jesus, proclaiming glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good-will unto men.—*Clarke*. A still small voice—The Chaldee has "a voice of angels singing in silence." Literally, as in the margin of the Revised Version, *a sound of gentle stillness*. There is nothing to indicate to us whether the sound was articulate or not, nor is it said that the Lord was now present, but the action of the prophet shows that he knew the time was come to present himself before Jehovah. For a similar recognition of God's presence compare Job 4. 16, "There was silence, and I heard a voice."—*Lumby*. What doest thou here?—This repeated question seeks to know whether the prophet has understood the

Authorized Version.

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Is'ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Da-mas'cus: ¹⁷ and when thou comest, anoint Haz'a-el to be king over Sy'ri-a:

Revised Version.

14 E-li'jah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the children of Is'ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way ¹⁷ to the wilderness of Da-mas'cus: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint

¹⁷ 2 Kings 8. 12, 13.

¹⁷ Or, by the wilderness to.

manifestations that have been made to him, and whether he is able to apply them to his own circumstances. The answer, coming in the same words as before, seems to declare that Elijah is still ignorant. God, therefore, gives him direct charges which shall make it clear that, though his own success has not been apparent, God's work is still going forward, and that new agents are already prepared, in Jehovah's design, for advancing it as he sees best.—*Cambridge Bible.*

Humanity in the presence of God. Ver. 13. It is no marvel if Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle. Had there not been much courage in the prophet's faith he had not stayed out these affrightful forerunners of the divine presence, though with his face covered. The very angels do no less, before that all-glorious majesty, than veil themselves with their wings. Far be it from us once to think of that infinite and omnipotent Deity, without a humble awfulness.—*Bishop Hall.*

Noise is not strength; nor quietness weakness. Vers 11, 12. See ILLUSTRATIONS. One of the most eloquent of the prophets uttered that beautiful and profound saying, "There was the hiding of His power." It is the hidden forces of life that are by far the most powerful. No earthquake that ever tossed whole continents into chaos, no hurricane or cyclone that cut a swathe of devastation through rich populations, has shown a tithe of the strength evinced each recurring year by the silent forces of spring. The storms beat on the surface of the earth, and we exclaim, "How strongly the wind blows!" and we invent machines to measure its rapidity. But no man ever invented a machine to measure the strength of the unadvertised forces that cause the roots to swell, and fill their delicate fibers with sap, and nourish the forces of vegetation under ground, during the winter months. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. THE COMMAND. Verses 15-18.

15, 16, 17. Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus — It seems from what follows that the margin of the Revised Version gives the truer sense, "by the wilderness of Damascus." Elijah was to go back through the wilderness, the way by which he had come to Horeb, and we see that he came first to Abel-meholah, which was on the west of the Jordan, not far from Beth-shean. Thus he was sent by God's encouragement, and with his protection, back through the land of Israel from which he had fled.—*Lumby.* **Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.**—So far as the Scripture record goes we have no notice that Elijah performed this command literally, Hazael being subsequently informed by Elisha (2 Kings 8. 13) that the Lord had made known that he should become king of Syria, though even then he was not anointed. We must interpret the meaning of the command in accordance with the prophet's action, judging that he understood what was intended by the words. The word "anoint" is used concerning Jehu and Elisha, as well as Hazael; and we know that Elijah did not anoint Elisha, though he could easily have done so, but only made known, by the act of casting his prophetic mantle upon him, that he was called to that office. In the same way, then, we may understand the rest of the divine order. Elijah was to receive assurance for himself, and to make known that assurance to others, as he found occasion, that God was still ruling Israel both from without and from within. To convince him that an idolatrous nation will not be unpunished, he commissions him to appoint three persons who were destined in Providence to avenge God's controversy with the people of Israel. Anointing is used synonymously with appointment (Judg. 9. 8), and is applied to all named, although Jehu alone had the consecrated oil poured over his head. They were all three destined to be eminent instruments in achieving the

Authorized Version.

16 And ¹⁶ Je'hu the son of Nim'shi shalt thou anoint to be king over Is'ra-el: and ¹⁷ E-li'sha the son of Sha'phat, of A'bel-me-ho'lah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

17 And ²⁰ it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Haz'a-el shall Je'hu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Je'hu ²¹ shall E-li'sha slay.

Revised Version.

16 Haz'a-el to be king over Syr'i-a: and Je'hu the son of Nim'shi shalt thou anoint to be king over Is'ra-el: and E-li'sha the son of Sha'phat of Ab'el-me-ho'lah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Haz'a-el shall Je'hu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Je'hu shall E-li'sha slay.

¹⁶ 2 Kings 9. 1.—¹⁷ Luke 4. 27; called Eliseus.—²⁰ 2 Kings 8. 12; 9. 14; 10. 6; 12. 3.—²¹ Hos. 6. 6.

destruction of idolaters, though in different ways. But of the three commissions Elijah personally executed only one, namely, the call of Elisha to be his assistant and successor, and by him the other two were accomplished. 2 Kings 8. 7-18; 9. 1-10.—*Bible Commentary.* Anoint—It is to be remembered that in other cases, also, of oracular sayings the prophets are commanded to do something (symbolically) which (in reality) is to be brought to pass by the Lord. Comp. Jer. 19. 1, *sq.*; 27. 2; 28. 10, *sq.*; Ezek. 5. 1-12; 12. 3, *sq.* The disciple of the prophets who anointed Jehu under the direction of Elisha was obliged to begin this action with the words: "Thus saith Jehovah: I have anointed thee king over Israel." 2 Kings 9. 3. The real anointing was performed, therefore, by Jehovah himself.—*Lange.* Jehu the son of Nimshi—We learn from the account of Jehu's anointings (2 Kings 9. 2) that Nimshi was Jehu's grandfather. He was "Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi." He was one of Ahab's captains, and heard the sentence which Elijah pronounced against Ahab for the murder of Naboth. 2 Kings 9. 25, 26. When Jehoram had succeeded Ahab Jehu was anointed and conspired against him, and slew not only Jehoram, but also caused to be slain seventy sons of Ahab, and the brethren of Ahaziah, King of Judah, and all the worshipers of Baal. For the history of these doings see 2 Kings 10. It is clear that Jehu looked upon himself as God's ordained instrument, and considered his actions as "zeal for the Lord." We may, therefore, conclude that there had been made known to him something of the message which the Lord here gives to Elijah, and that, inspired by it, he rose against the house of Ahab.—*Cambridge Bible.* Elisha . . . of Abel-meholah—For the history of Elisha see 2 Kings chaps. 2-13. At the time of his call Elisha was probably a young man. His father and mother were still alive, and he was living with them.—*Lumby.* Prophet in thy room—These words would teach Elijah that he was not to expect the accomplishment of all God's purposes during his own life-time, but only to prepare a representative to be ready when it was God's will to call him away. Till Elijah is about to be taken up into heaven (2 Kings 2) we read no more of Elisha than is told us in this chapter.—*Cambridge Bible.* Shall Elisha slay—Of the expression "slay," used of Elisha, the same thing is true as of "anoint;" for Elisha did not actually slay. The word is used in the prophetic sense, as it is used of the Messiah in Isa. 11. 4: "He shall smite the earth [the land] with the rod [that is, the rod of correction] of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the godless." Comp. Isa. 48. 2, where the mouth of the prophet is called "a sharp sword," into which the Lord has made it; just so Rev. 1. 16; 2. 16; 19. 15. The fundamental and main thought of the oracle is in general this: that the judgment of Jehovah will certainly come, but the judging and dividing will be brought in many ways.—*Lange.* We read of none that were slain by the hand of Elijah's successor. But his voice and his labors for the overthrow of false worship and for making known, both to Israel and to the nations round about, that there was "no God in all the earth but in Israel" (2 Kings 5. 15), were constant, and by this "sword of his mouth" he overthrew the foes of Jehovah. His work was effectual in places and ways where Hazael and Jehu wrought no deliverance.—*Lumby.*

The benefits of activity are incalculable. Ver. 15. See ILLUSTRATIONS. If one is tempted to sin, redoubled effort in his ordinary occupation is one of the best hedges and fences against the temptation. If one is sunk in sorrow, there is no earthly source of relief like hard work.

Labor is life! 'tis the still water falleth;
Idleness ever deepareth, bewalleth;

Authorized Version.

18 Yet ¹ I ²² have left *me* seven thousand in Is'ra-el, all the knees which have not bowed unto Ba'al, and ²³ every mouth which hath not kissed him.

Revised Version.

18 Yet will I leave *me* seven thousand in Is'ra-el, all the knees which have not bowed unto Ba'al and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

c Or, I will leave. — 22 Rom. 11. 4. — 23 Hos. 13. 2.

Keep the watch wound or the dark rust assaileth.
Labor is rest from the sorrows that greet us,
Rest from all petty vexations that meet us,
Rest from sin promptings that ever entreat us.
Work, and pure slumbers shall wait on thy pillow;
Work—thou shalt ride over care's coming billow;
Lie not down wearied 'neath woe's weeping willow.—*Miss Osgood.*

God maketh the wrath of man to praise him. Ver. 18. It enlarges one's conception of divine providence to think that Hazael and Jehu and Nero and the Duke of Alva, and the corrupt politicians who in later years sometimes are exalted to high positions in the State, the bad governors and venal legislators, are, in the midst of their wickedness, while pursuing their own degraded idols, after all, working out unconsciously God's praise.

18. I have left *me* seven thousand.—Better, as in the margin, *I will leave seven thousand in Israel*.—In the judgments that are to come by the hand of the ministers I have named, all Israel shall not be cut off. There will be found seven thousand who have never worshiped Baal. Here Elijah learns, to his confusion, that he is not the only Israelite who remains true to God.—*Terry*. "Seven thousand" is used for an indefinite number. On this use of "seven" comp. 18. 43; also Prov. 24. 16; Matt. 18. 21, 22. The total was small compared with the whole people of Israel, but they were God's "holy remnant," the seed of a purified congregation of the future.—*Lumby*. Kissed him.—That kissing was part of the worship offered to false gods we can see from Hos. 13. 2, "Let the men that sacrifice *kiss* the calves." Probably the Latin *adoro* is etymologically connected with this.—*Cambridge Bible*. Idolators often kissed their hands in honor of their idols; and hence the [probable] origin of *adoration*—bringing the hand to the mouth after touching the idol, if it were within reach; and, if not, kissing the right hand in token of respect and subjection.—*Clarke*.

Because a failure seems complete, it does not always follow that it is so. Ver. 18. Many a time it has seemed to earnest Christians almost as if God had withdrawn from the government of the world. Probably one half of all the martyrs that have died for truth and goodness and liberty have felt as they died that with them and their fellows the hopes of the world were perishing. It must have surprised the man who said, "I, even I only, am left," to hear that there were seven thousand others whom he had not counted; and the lesson he then and there learned we may have to recall many a time in our lives. All the good of the earth is not bound up in us. God's plans will not fail,

For right is right, since God is God,
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin.—*Faber*.

The Lord knoweth them that are his. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Even Elijah at that time knew them not, and yet there were seven thousand of them. Their cry is not heard in all the streets, their life is a hidden one. They are scattered in all lands, in all conditions, among high and low, rich and poor; they do not themselves know one another, but the Lord knoweth them. How often we consider a person as a lost child of the world who, in the eyes of the Searcher of hearts, is a child of God. How often we think that a nation, a city, a community, is utterly corrupt, and yet even there too the Lord has a hidden seed, and elections of grace.—*Lange*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Persecution for righteousness' sake. Ver. 2.—The pious Romaine, pastor of St. Dunstan's Church, Aberford, had often to preach by the light of a single candle which he held in his hand, as the church wardens would not suffer the church to be lighted.

The worst you can do to a good man is to persecute him, and the worst that persecution can do is to kill him. This is as bad as to spite a ship by launching it. The soul is built for heaven and the ship for the ocean, and blessed be the hour that gives each to its true element.—*Becher*.

When a blind man comes against you in the street you are not angry with him; you say, He is blind, poor man, or he would not have hurt me. So may you say of those who wrongfully use you.—*Spurgeon*.

Passion blinds men to their own interests. Ver. 2.—A Roman Cæsar prepared a great feast for his nobles. The appointed day turned out so foul as to hinder the meeting, whereupon he ordered those who had bows to shoot their arrows at Jupiter, their chief god. The arrows returned upon their own heads, severely wounding many of them.

A bee in inflicting a sting leaves its barbed weapon in the wound, and, being thus mutilated, inevitably dies. It stings itself to death.

Passion is the drunkenness of the mind.—*South*.

His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
On passion's changeful tide was tost.—*Scott*.

O how the passions, insolent and strong,
Bear our weak minds their rapid course along;
Make us the madness of their will obey;
Then die, and leave us to our griefs a prey.—*Crabbe*.

Reformers must expect to suffer. Vers. 1-3.—"So you intend to be a reformer of men's morals, young man," said an old peer to Wilberforce. "That is the end of reformers," said he, as he pointed to a picture of the crucifixion.—*Punshon*.

Our antagonist is our helper.—*Burke*.

Not a truth has to art or to science been given,
But bones have ached for it, and souls toiled and striven,
And many have striven, and many have failed,
And many died, slain by the wrong they assailed.—*Meredith*.

Prudence is sometimes better than valor. Ver. 3.—In the Jardin des Plantes we saw a hooded snake in a most unamiable condition of temper. There was a thick glass and a stout wire between us, and though we did nothing but look at him he darted at us with such vehemence of malice the keeper requested us to move away, saying it is never wise to keep near such creatures. "Caution is the parent of safety."

I'm too discreet
To run amuck, and tilt at all I meet.—*Pope*.

Self-love, my liege, is not so vile a sin as self-neglecting.—*Shakespeare*.

Good people meet great reverses. Ver. 4.—Job Orton says a friend of his received a large legacy to distribute in charity. The first year after he came into possession of it he was applied to for a share of it by twenty-three worthy men who had once ridden in their carriages.

A benevolent Dublin merchant who had once been in receipt of an annual income of twenty-five thousand dollars, and who was one of the founders of the Old Men's Asylum in that city, became an inmate of it in his old age.

But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.—*Shakespeare*.

"Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?"
"Know him?" she said; "I knew him far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street,
Held his head high, and cared for no man be."
Slowly and sadly Enoch answered her,
"His head is low now, no man cares for him."—*Tennyson*.

Despondency may arise from physical causes. Ver. 4.—Dr. Rush, a monarch in medicine, after curing hundreds of cases of mental depression, himself fell sick, lost his religious hope as a consequence of nervous disorder, and would not believe his pastor as to the cause of his depression. Andrew Fuller, Thomas Scott, Cowper, Brainard, and Melancthon were mighty men of God, but all illustrations of the fact that the body rules the mind. An eminent physician says no man ever died a greatly triumphant death whose disease was below the diaphragm. *Stackhouse*, a learned Christian writer, does not think Saul was insane when David played before him, but it was hypochondria coming from inflammation of the liver.

Colton declares that in moments of despondency even Shakespeare thought himself no poet, and Raphael doubted his right to be called a painter.

So high as we have mounted in delight,
In our dejection do we sink so low.—*Wordsworth*.

How gladly would I meet
Mortality my sentence, and be earth
Insensible I how glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap!—*Milton*.

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,
I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all.—*Tennyson*.

Good cheer for the needy. Vers. 5-7.—In the United States Mint at Philadelphia there is one room which contains the furnace for melting the gold. Its floor is covered with an iron grating. By this device eighty thousand dollars' worth of gold is saved every year from the gold dust floating invisibly in the air. Such is God's care for the minutest interest of his children.

A pious lady worried for years over the thought of death. She consulted many friends without obtaining any solace. At last an old colored "auntie" heard her story and responded, "Why, it isn't *dying* grace ye want, child; it's *living* grace. Go ahead and do your work, and let the dying take its own time and grace." In this course she triumphed.

Do not cross the bridge till you come to it.

Travelers take with them letters of credit good all over the world. Such letters are for a specific amount, and the banker is secured by prepayment. Sometimes an unlimited letter is issued and made good by a responsible indorser. Such is God's provision for every pilgrim. "All your need."—*Bishop Foss*.

Lord of himself, though not of lands;
And having nothing, yet hath all.

Fear not the future, weep not for the past.—*Shelley*.

O holy trust! O endless sense of rest!
Like the beloved John,
To lay his head upon the Saviour's breast
And thusto journey on.—*Longfellow*.

Greatness has its penalties. Ver. 10.—When Cromwell was in the height of his success as Protector of England he was apprehensive for the safety of his life. His aged mother at the sound of a musket would be afraid her son was shot, and could not be satisfied unless she saw him once a day. In a burst of disappointment he once exclaimed, "I had rather keep a flock of sheep."

The high places are the cold places!—*Bishop Wiley*.

Great men stand like solitary towers in the city of God.—*Longfellow*.

The mightier man, the mightier is the thing
That makes him honored or begets him hate;
For greatest scandal waits on greatest state.—*Shakespeare*.

Censure is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent.—*Swift*.

It is the practice of the public to bark at eminent men as little dogs do at strangers—*Seneca*.

High stations, tumult, but not bliss, create;
None think the great unhappy but the great.—*Young*.

He who ascends to mountain tops shall find
Their loftiest peaks most wrapped in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those below.—*Byron*.

The value of quietness. Ver. 12.—Oxygen, of which nine tenths of the ocean and one half the rocks are composed, is a gas so delicate that no man ever saw or smelled it. It exists in three forms: in one it is the fire, the source of earthquake and storm; in the second it is the element of decay; but the real power is in the third—the element of life, as all living creatures breathe it. It works in silence; the youngest babe can breathe it, yet all the life in the world comes from it.

"How quiet everything is! not a leaf stirring," said a young sparrow; "how delicious a puff of wind would be!" "We shall have more than you want before long," croaked an old raven. Before many hours a tempest swept the country. "What a comfort the storm is over; our nest is spoiled! I never remember such a night," said the sparrow. "Ah!" said the raven, "take my word for it, *there's nothing like a storm to teach you the value of a calm.*"

Whitefield says, "I carefully sought out those acceptable tones that were like a spell upon the heart whenever the words were remembered."

The sword of Cromwell was so mighty that all Europe feared its flash, but the pen of Milton did even more for the cause of liberty.

The dew of one summer's night will accomplish more for the grain-field than fifty Caribbean whirlwinds.—*Talmage*.

Mightiest powers by deepest calms are fed,
And sleep, how oft, in things that gentlest be!

Speak gently! Love doth whisper low
The vows that true hearts bind;
And gently friendship's accents flow;
Affection's voice is kind.

The benefits of activity. Vers. 15-17.—A tourist crossing a snowy peak alone felt a drowsiness, to yield to which would be fatal. But resolution was powerless to check it. Just then he stumbled against a heap which proved to be a human being buried in a snow-drift. He set to work chafing the frozen limbs. The record stands: "He saved a brother, and was saved himself."

The motto of the Baptist Missionary Society represents a bullock standing between a plow and an altar, with the inscription, "Ready for either—for toil or sacrifice." This is the spirit of true service.

A lady watching a potter turn his swift wheel round by foot said to him, "How tired that foot must be!" "No, ma'am," he said. "It isn't the foot that works that's tired, it's the one that *stands*."

You cannot calculate how much corroding dust is kept off by labor, how much of dull dependency is thus hindered. Not the jeweler's mercurial polish, but daily use, keeps your silver pencil from tarnishing.

The labor we delight in physics pain.—*Shakespeare*.

Get leave to work in this world—'tis the best you get at all.—*Mrs. Browning*.

Trust no future, how'er pleasant!
Let the dead past bury its dead.
Act—act in the living present,
Heart within and God o'erhead.—*Longfellow*.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. Open with a brief review of the last lesson, and call out from the class a picture of Elijah at the summit of his success, the prophets of Baal slain, the people returning to Jehovah, and

the king submissive to Elijah's will. It seemed as if a complete reformation had been accomplished, and Elijah's work was done!

2. Now turn to the next day, and what do we see? Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, in flight to the wilderness, hiding from a woman's threat! Give a word-picture of the flying prophet, and on the map show his journey from Samaria to Mt. Horeb, narrating the incidents by the way.

3. Note the causes of this strange revulsion, and of Elijah's seeming weakness. F. W. Robertson's remarkable sermon on "Elijah" will suggest an outline on this subject. He shows the causes of Elijah's despondency to have been: 1.) *Want of occupation*. While there was work to be done Elijah was brave. 2.) *Nervous exhaustion*; mind sympathizing with body; the revulsion after a day of mighty effort and strain. 3.) *Loneliness*. Note how often Elijah said, "I am alone." He felt the need of companionship, a kindred soul to commune with his own. 4.) *Apparent failure*. The day before he had deemed his work a success; now it seemed like an absolute failure. "All is lost; let me die," is his thought.

4. Next observe how God dealt with Elijah. He might have smitten him with lightning as one unworthy of his high calling. But instead, God showed tenderness, grace, and a divine wisdom. 1.) He refreshed his physical nature by food and sleep, as a preparation for discipline and for duty. Take care of the body for the sake of the soul. 2.) He showed him by the earthquake, the fire, and the voice that seeming power is not always real, and in verse 18 that Elijah's work had not been in vain. 3.) He gave him companionship: Elisha, a man of opposite nature to his own. 4.) He gave him work, a great commission to be accomplished. Note that the two errands, to Syria and Israel, were not delivered in Elijah's time. It required the rest of his life to prepare for their consummation. Elijah had work enough to last him a life-time, and in it he found his courage renewed.

5. The application of all this is plain. 1.) Let us not be elated by seeming success, nor discouraged by apparent failure. 2.) Let us see that the body does not clog the soul by its weakness. 3.) Let us seek religious companionships, and have earnest, spiritually minded friends. 4.) Let us do God's work, and leave its results with God.

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LESSON VI.—February 8.

AHAB'S COVETOUSNESS.—1 Kings 21. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Take heed, and beware of covetousness.—Luke 12. 15.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—B. C. 899 or 900.

PLACES.—1. **Ahab's palace** in the city of Samaria; 2. **Jezreel**, an ancient city of Canaan, on the western declivity of Mount Gilboa, overlooking the great plain to which it gave the name Esdraelon. It was a stronghold for the house of Saul. 2 Sam. 2. 8, etc. Ahab had a palace in the eastern quarters of the town [for it was just as Jehu entered the city gate from the East that Jezebel looked out at him, 2 Kings 9. 31], and 3. **Naboth's vineyard** was outside of the eastern wall, near the fountain [for there Joram's body was cast before Jehu entered the city, 2 Kings 9. 24-26].

PERSONS.—1. **Ahab**, King of Israel. 2. **Queen Jezebel**. 3. **Naboth** the Jezreelite. 4. **Two false witnesses**. 5. **The elders and nobles** of Naboth's city.

CONNECTING LINKS.—After God's revelation to Elijah in Mount Horeb the prophet journeyed northward and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, whom God had selected to be his successor. Meantime Ben-hadad, King of Syria, totally ignorant of what had been foreshown to Elijah, that already forces were at work to dethrone him, invaded the kingdom of Israel and besieged its capital. He first made Ahab tributary, then sent messengers to select from Ahab's household treasures whatever might chance to please their royal master. Ahab resented this demand, and war was declared. A prophet of God foretold the utter overthrow of the Syrian armies, and directed how it was to be brought about. Ahab followed the divine direction, and as a result "slew the Syrians with great slaughter." Ben-hadad fled, and when at last he saw that his capture was inevitable he begged for his life. Ahab granted it on conditions degrading to the Syrian king; but God had "appointed this man [Ben-hadad] to utter destruction," and foretold Ahab's downfall because of his repeated disobedience.

Authorized Version.

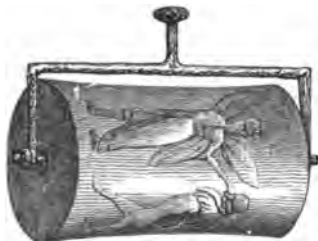
1 And it came to pass after these things, that Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had a vineyard, which was in 'Jez're-el, hard by the palace of A'hab king of Sa-ma'ri-a.
2 And A'hab spake unto Na'both, saying, 'Give me thy 'vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, be-

Revised Version.

1 And it came to pass after these things, that Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had a vineyard, which was in Jez're-el, hard by the palace of A'hab king of Sa-ma'ri-a. And A'hab spake unto Na'both, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden

¹ Judg. 4. 33; ¹ Sam. 29. 1.—² Exod. 20. 17; Hab. 2. 9; Luke 19. 15; ¹ John 2. 16.—³ 1 Sam. 8. 14.

I. COVETOUS AHAB. Verses 1-4.



THE KING'S SEAL.

and indicate that among the Hebrews much attention was given to the cultivation of plants, fruits,

Authorized Version.

cause it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

3 And Na'both said to A'hab, The LORD forbid it me, 'that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

4 And A'hab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had

Revised Version.

of herbs, because it is near unto my house; and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it: or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the 8 worth of it in money. And Na'both said to A'hab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of 4 my fathers unto thee. And A'hab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which

a Be good in thine eyes.—^a Lev. 25, 33; Num. 36, 7; Ezek. 46, 18.

and flowers.—*Terry*. These events must have taken place during a time of peace, when Ahab had leisure to think about the arrangement of his grounds; probably after Ben-hadad's utter defeat, otherwise the victory then granted to Ahab would have seemed like a condonation of his sin, and not in harmony with the doom pronounced in this chapter (ver. 19) by Elijah.—*Cambridge Bible*. **The Lord forbid it me**—This verse is very interesting, because (1) it makes clear that Naboth was a worshiper of Jehovah, and, in spite of the persecution of the prophets, did not shrink from making it known to the king by his language. Here was an example of one who had not bowed the knee nor given a kiss to Baal. And (2) the reason which he alleges for clinging to his inheritance shows that the teaching of the law of Moses (Num. 36, 7, 8; Lev. 25, 27, 28) concerning the sacredness of a paternal inheritance had taken firm hold of the minds of the people, so that Ahab did not think of venturing on harsh measures against one who put forward this religious plea as a bar to the royal desire.—*Lumby*. The inheritance of each tribe and family was inalienable, and could not, even by marriage, go into other hands; and, even if it were sold on account of distress, would revert to it again, without price, in the year of Jubilee. Num. 36, 1-13; Lev. 25, 10-25. According to Ezek. 46, 18, the prince himself could not force any one out of his property. This Mosaic law is connected most intimately with the stability of the theocracy; it secured its material foundation; and, if it were not always strictly observed and enforced, the main thought pervading it nevertheless struck strong roots into the consciousness of the people, and the preservation of the inheritance was for every covenant-keeping Israelite a matter not merely of loyalty toward his family and his tribe, not merely a prudential worldly affair, but a religious, sacred duty.—*Lange*.

Godliness with contentment is great gain. The desire for things which serve for pleasure is often a temptation to grievous sin. Therefore says the Scripture, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods, nor any thing that is his. Let the needy be thy first care, not thine own pleasures. Watch over thine heart, for desires apparently lawful, if not resisted and denied, may lead to ruin.—*Lange*.

Rectitude is rare. The men are rare who, for God and conscience' sake, will not yield to entreaties and offers, the granting of which would be advantageous to them, whilst the refusal would be accompanied with injury, and perhaps peril to themselves.—*Bähr*.

Worldly prosperity does not satisfy. Ver. 2 See ILLUSTRATIONS. The longings of a soul cannot be satisfied by the richest physical luxuries.

We hold our rights direct from God. Ver. 3. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

4. **Ahab came**—It is clear from the continuation of the story that it was to Samaria that Ahab returned after his interview with Naboth.—*Cambridge Bible*. **Heavy and displeased**—Sulky and sour, just after receiving the word of the Lord from one of the sons of the prophets. Chap. 20, 43. His going to bed, and turning away his face, and refusing to eat, show up most vividly his mean passions and the childish fretfulness of his disposition.—*Terry*. **And he laid him down, etc.**—This detail shows, like so much else in Ahab's history, how thoroughly he could be dominated by the more powerful mind of Jezebel. While absent from her some signs of improvement might appear, even such as might seem to Elijah to promise hopes of a change; but when she appears they are all gone.—*Cambridge Bible*.

The weakness of wickedness. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Pointing a sign of weakness of character. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.

spoken to him; for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 But Jez'e-bel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jez'e-bel his wife said unto him, Dost thou ^anow govern the kingdom of Is'ra-el? Arise, *and* eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I ^awill give thee the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite.

8 So she wrote letters in A'hab's name, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city dwelling with Na'both.

Revised Version.

Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jez'e-bel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I

7 will not give thee my vineyard. And Jez'e-bel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Is'ra-el? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite. So she wrote ¹letters in A'hab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city,

^a 1 Sam. 8. 14.—^a Jer. 6. 7; Mic. 2. 1; 7. 2.¹ Or, a letter.

II. WICKED JEZEBEL. Verses 5-10.

5, 6, 7. Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?—There is not expressed here any sign of a question in the original, but there can be no doubt that this is the force of the words. The Hebrew order is, "Thou now governest," etc., the pronoun being emphatically expressed, so that the sense is, "*Thou* art king, art thou not? why, then, let such a matter trouble thee or stand in the way of thy will?" Jezebel does not urge Ahab to act the despot's part, but plays it for him.—*Cambridge Bible*. If this had been a direct question there could have been only one truthful answer—it was not Ahab who governed Israel, but his stronger minded wife. "Thou, surely, art become now a mighty king to be thus set at naught! A powerful ruler to be thus sent to bed disheartened by an obstinate subject."—*Terry*. I will give thee the vineyard—I, the wife, since thou hast not the courage to act as a man and a king.—*Thenius*.

The influence of the opposite sex. Ver. 5. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

8, 9, 10. She wrote letters in Ahab's name—The letters would be prepared for her by the royal secretaries. Jezebel's part was to take the signet-ring of her husband and therewith affix the royal seal, that the document might go forth with authority. Apparently Ahab asked no question about the means which his wife meant to employ.—*Cambridge Bible*. Sealed them with his seal.—In giving validity to documents names were not in those days, nor are they now in the East, signed by the hand in writing, but impressed by a seal on which the name is engraved. Hence the importance which is attached to the signet throughout the sacred books.—*Kitto and Keil*. The elders and . . . the nobles—The law ordered (Deut. 16. 18) that there should be judges appointed in every city, and we cannot doubt the existence of such a tribunal in a place so important as Jezreel, where the elders and nobles would form the bench of magistrates. The sequel shows that for such an offense as that charged against Naboth they had the power of life and death. But the whole proceeding is very Oriental. The royal letter dictates the sentence and how it is to be obtained, and the persons to whom it is addressed make no scruple about

Authorized Version.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, *Proclaim a fast, and set Na'both *on high among the people:

10 And set two men, 'sons of Be'li-al, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou 'didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and *stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jez'e-bel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

Revised Version.

9 and that dwelt with Na'both. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Na'both *on high among the people: and set two men, sons of 'Be'li-al, before him, and let them bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst 'curse God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he die. And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who dwelt in his city, did as Jez'e-bel had sent unto them, according as it was written in the letters

*Or, Call an assembly. — c In the top of the people. — † Deut. 12, 13; Judg. 19, 22; 1 Sam. 2, 12; 2 Sam. 20, 1; 23, 6; 2 Cor. 4, 15. — ‡ Esd. 72, 28; Lev. 24, 16, 16; Acts 6, 11. — § Lev. 24, 14.

*Or, at the head of. — † That is, worthlessness. — ‡ Or, renouance.

obeying, although the last words of this verse increase the enormity of their proceeding by telling that they "were in his city, dwelling with Naboth," and so, it would seem, well acquainted with his character.—*Cambridge Bible*. Proclaim a fast—Let a day of humiliation be appointed, for it must be represented that a great wrong has been committed both against God and the king. The command of God (Joel 2. 12) by his prophet is, "Turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping." Hence the action is to express the popular sorrow for some wrong done by which the whole city is contaminated.—*Lumby*. A public fast was customary in the event of national calamities (Joel 1. 14), after grievous defeats (Judg. 20. 26; 1 Sam. 31. 13), after great sins (1 Sam. 7. 6; Joel 2. 12), or for the turning away of apprehended misfortune (2 Chron. 20. 2, 3, 7).—*Lange*. Set Naboth on high—He was of a family of note.—*Josephus*. By thus, at the beginning of the process, treating him with honor they would seem to make it plain that, but for the evidence against him, they would have been glad to think him innocent.—*Cambridge Bible*. If his guilt should be shown by a sufficient number of witnesses this publicity would expose him all the more to popular fury.—*Terry*. We see that Jezebel gives no hint to any one of the true cause for wishing to put Naboth out of the way. Had she done so she must have mentioned the reason for his scruple, and the elders of Jezreel, though they had forgotten the laws of Jehovah, would not have cared to give publicity to Naboth's answer. The ground for holding firm to his inheritance would most likely have found an echo in many an Israelite's heart.—*Lumby*.

The strongest character, and not the man in the highest position, really governs. Ver. 8. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

One sin leads to another. Ver. 9. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

10. Two men—The law required at least two witnesses to convict a man of murder or any great crime. See Num. 35. 30; Deut. 17. 6; 19. 15.—*Terry*. So even Jezebel bears witness to the Pentateuch.—*Wordsworth*. Sons of Belial—In Deut. 13. 13 the Revised Version has translated this expression "base fellows," putting in the margin "sons of worthlessness." This is the sense every-where in the Old Testament, and should have been in the text. In New Testament times "Belial" was personified (see 2 Cor. 6. 15), but there is no trace of this idea in the earlier Scriptures. The men were good-for-naughts, who would swear to anything for which they were paid. Thou didst blaspheme God and the king—The verb in the original is very frequently used of blessing, but it had the opposite sense also. It is used in the bad sense also in Job 1. 5; 2. 9. It is remarkable that an accusation of this nature should have been set afoot by Jezebel. We need not, however, assume that she had any care about the cursing of God, only that she found this the most convenient mode of getting rid of Naboth. But among the people, who were to suppose Naboth justly executed, there must have still been left some regard for the divine name and the divine law. The death by stoning was appointed by the Mosaic code (Lev. 24. 16).—*Cambridge Bible*.

The awful results of great talent devoted to wrong uses. Ver. 8-10. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.

12 They ¹⁰ proclaimed a fast, and set Na'both on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Be'li-al, and sat before him: and the men of Be'li-al witnessed against him, *even* against Na'both, in the presence of the people, saying, Na'both did blaspheme God and the king. ¹¹Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jez'e-bel, saying, Na'both is stoned, and is dead.

15 And it came to pass, when Jez'e-bel heard that Na'both was stoned, and was dead, that Jez'e-bel said to A'hab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Na'both is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when A'hab heard that Na'both was dead, that A'hab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, to take possession of it.

Revised Version.

12 which she had sent unto them. They proclaimed a fast, and set Na'both ¹⁰on high among the people. And the two men, sons of Be'li-al, came in and sat before him: and the men of Be'li-al bare witness against him, even against Na'both, in the presence of the people, saying, Na'both did ¹¹curse God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jez'e-bel, saying,

15 Na'both is stoned, and dead. And it came to pass, when Jez'e-bel heard that Na'both was stoned, and was dead, that Jez'e-bel said to A'hab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, which he refused to give thee for money: for 16 Na'both is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass, when A'hab heard that Na'both was dead, that A'hab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite to take possession of it.

¹⁰ Job. 15. 34; 24. 30; Prov. 11. 9; 29. 12; Isa. 9. 16, 17; 32. 6, 7; 58. 4; 1 Tim. 4. 2.—¹¹ Num. 15. 36; Josh. 7. 24; 9 Chron. 24. 21; Mark 16. 30; Acts 7. 58, 59; Heb. 11. 37.

¹⁰ Or, at the head of.—¹¹ Or, renounce.

III. MURDERED NABOTH. Verses 11-16.

11-14. In the presence of the people—As much publicity as possible was given to the accusation, that thus it might have the color of being legally carried out.—*Lumby*. That he died—Not only was Naboth put to death, but according to another passage (2 Kings 9. 26), his sons were included in the destruction.—*Lumby*. They were, perhaps, the only heirs that could rightly claim the inheritance; or, like Achan's children, they may have been regarded and treated as involved in the parent's guilt.—*Terry*. The proceeding against Naboth is a combination of the heaviest crimes, for by it are trodden under foot the three divine commands: Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. How thankful should we be that we dwell in Christendom!—*Langs*.

It is never right to do wrong, even though one's official superior commands it. Ver. 11. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

15, 16. Take possession of the vineyard—Some have thought that the property of one so executed would become confiscated. Others have suggested that there was some relationship between Ahab and the family of Naboth. It seems unnecessary to seek for reasons in such a case. Where so much had been done unlawfully, and a life, or perhaps several, taken by false accusation, it would be a small matter to seize on the ground without any plea of law or kinship.—*Cambridge Bible*. And Ahab was pleased with what had been done, and sprang up from his bed, and went to see Naboth's vineyard.—*Josephus*. There was certainly no time lost by Ahab. His entry on the possession seems to have been made the very next day after Naboth's death. We learn afterward (2 Kings 9. 25) that Jehu and Bidkar rode with Ahab at the time, and so appalling was the curse which Elijah pronounced on the wretched king that it was imprinted on Jehu's memory and he could quote it many years afterward apparently in its very words.—*Lumby*.

Success does not always lead to happiness. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Retribution usually follows sin. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Evil masters can ever find evil servants.—*Bähr.*

Every man not rooted and grounded in God becomes more and more grasping; in his vain purse-pride he thinks all the world must yield to his will, and hates bitterly him who independently and resolutely upholds his rights against him.

Godlessness and corruption in high life is a poison, which extends throughout all society, even to the lowest rank; no example is so powerful upon all classes of society.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Worldly prosperity does not satisfy. Ver. 2.—Caligula, with the world at his feet, was mad with a longing for the moon, and could he have gained it the imperial lunatic would have coveted the sun.

"One should think," said I, "that the proprietor of all this" (Keddlestone, the seat of Lord Scarsfield) "must be happy." "Nay, sir," said Johnson, "all this excludes but one evil—poverty."—*Boswell.*

The danger of wealth should teach contentment in a humble state. It is related of Pope Pius V. that when dying he cried out despairingly: "When I was in a low condition I had some hopes of salvation; when I was advanced to a cardinal I greatly doubted it; but since I came to the popedom I have no hope at all."

Poverty is the want of much, avarice the want of every thing.

Rank and riches, though chains of gold, are, notwithstanding, still chains.

A man that will not do well in his present place because he longs to be higher is fit neither to be where he is nor yet above it.—*Becher.*

Nature is satisfied with little, grace with less, but ambition with nothing.

Can wealth give happiness? look round and see
What gay distress! what splendid misery!
Whatever fortune lavishly can pour
The mind annihilates, and calls for more.—*Young.*

My wants are many, and, if told,
Would muster many a score;
And were each wish a mint of gold
I still should long for more.—*John Q. Adams.*

We hold our rights direct from God. Ver. 3.—When the letters patent were delivered to Roy McDonnell, of Dunluce, from Queen Elizabeth, confirming his title to his castle and estates, he drew his sword, and, hacking the parchment in pieces, thrust it into the fire, indignantly declaring that the lands he had won by the sword should never be held by a sheepskin.

A king of Spain wished to build a pavilion on a field near his garden, but the owner refused to sell. The king seized the field and the woman complained to a judge. One day the brave judge came to the king in the field, and, having filled an empty sack with earth, humbly implored the king to aid him in putting it on his horse. The king courteously attempted, but let it fall, complaining of its great weight. "It is only a small part of the ground thou hast wrested from thy subject," said the judge. "How, then, wilt thou bear the weight of the whole field before the great Judge?" The field was restored.

A Welshman suspected of radicalism by the British government was watched by spies. Knowing this, he wrapped up a book in paper, wrote on the back of it in large letters, "THE RIGHTS OF MAN," and placed it in the window. A government agent purchased the book, and to his chagrin found a copy of the Bible.

While some one was praising the honesty of human nature before a famous Scotch divine, the latter said, "Hoot, hoot, mon, human nature is a rogue and a scoundrel, or why should it perpetually stand in need of laws and religion!"

Better to be wronged than wrong; let it pass.

O execrable son, so to aspire
Above his brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurped from God; not given.—*Milton.*

God befriend us, as our cause is just.—*Shakespeare.*

The weakness of wickedness. Ver. 4.—A young fellow who prided himself on his success as a notorious sinner was expatiating on the qualifications necessary to a perfect debauchee. Having asked the opinion of a good man present he received for reply: "You have omitted the two most important ones, namely, an excessively weak head and a thoroughly bad heart."

A very shallow stream will suffice to drown one if he lies prostrate in it. And the desire of the smallest gain can as thoroughly drown in perdition as if the object of cupidity were the wealth of Croesus.

In the fable the tail of the snake gained precedence of the head and led the way in the creature's journeying. Being quite blind, the new guide dashed against stones and trees, and at last drowned both itself and the head in the river of death. Not less foolish or fatal is the course of the man who gives to his baser nature supreme control.

I dare no more fret than curse or swear.—*Weesley*.

Miserable is the state of the sad souls who lived
Above infamy and beneath praise. Heaven
Rejects them that they may not alter its beauty,
And hell does not want them. The world has
Not kept the memory of them; do not talk
Of them—look! and pass on.—*Dante*.

If weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it.
All wickedness is weakness; that plea, therefore,
With God or man, will gain thee no remission.—*Milton*.

The power of woman's influence. Vers. 5-7. Napoleon feared Madame de Staël more than an army of one hundred thousand men. Said he, "She carries a quiver full of arrows that would hit a man though seated on the rainbow."

The worst kind of sinners are those who help to make other sinners.

More than one woman goes to the making of one man. The mother makes the man, perhaps, but the wife manufactures him.—*Miss Cleveland*.

Where is the man who has the power and skill
To stem the torrent of a woman's will?
For if she will, she will, you may depend on't;
And if she wont, she wont; so there's an end on't;
And when a lady's in the case,
You know all other things give place.—*Gay*.

Disguise our bondage as we will,
'Tis woman, woman rules us still.—*Moore*.

She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And humble cares, and delicate fears,
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
And love and thought and joy.—*Wordsworth*.

Appearances deceive—A king may be but a tool. Ver. 7.—I stood in a cheese-monger's store, and, being in a fidgety humor, I slightly struck a fine cheese in the window with my stick. To my surprise it gave out a metallic sound. Its crockery jingle led me to the correct conclusion that I had discovered a sham.—*Spurgeon*.

A traveler showed Lavater two portraits—one of a highway-man, the other of Kant, the philosopher. He was to distinguish between them. Lavater took up the former and said, "Here is the true philosopher—penetration here, reflection there," etc. Turning to that of the philosopher he said, The calm-thinking villain is so strongly marked in his face it needs no comment.

A famous picture, when viewed from a distance, represented a holy friar with a book before him and hands crossed in devotion. Close inspection showed the supposed book was a punch-bowl, into which he was squeezing the juice of a lemon.

The king who delegates his power to other hands but ill deserves the crown he wears.

How little do they see what is, who frame
Their hasty judgment upon that which seems.—*Southey*.

How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, do wear upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk.—*Shakespeare*.

Great talent devoted to wrong or useless ends. Vers. 8-10.—Alexander the Great despised useless feats of dexterity. While others lavished admiration on a man whose *forte* was the throwing of small peas through the eye of a needle, he ordered him a present suitable to his employment—a basket of peas.

A clergyman spoke at a school examination on the duty of training up loyal citizens. During the address he asked, as he pointed to a large flag hanging on one side the room, "Boys, what is that flag for?" One exclaimed, "To hide the dirt, sir!"

I know a minister who is great upon the ten toes of the beast, the mystical meaning of badgers' akin, and the four faces of the cherubim, but he never touches on the sins of business men. He reminds me of a lion engaged in a mouse-hunt.—*Spurgeon*.

Grimshaw thus reproved a lady who expressed admiration for a gifted but inconsistent minister: "Madam, I am glad you never saw the devil. You so esteem talent without sanctity you might fall in love with him."

If any person were mentioned to Gray, the poet, as a man of ability, he always asked, "Is he good for any thing?"

Worth makes the Man and want of it the Fellow.

Honor and shame from no condition rise.
Act well your part; there all the honor lies.—*Pope*.

Talents angel-bright
If wanting worth, are shining instruments
In false ambition's hand, to finish faults
Illustrious, and give infamy renown.—*Young*.

When godliness is wanting justice will be violated. Ver. 13.—Lord Barrington once asked Collins, an infidel, how it was that he took such care to have his servants attend to church regularly? He replied he did it to prevent their robbing or murdering him.

An infidel would be guilty of any crime, if he were inclined to it.—*Johnson*.

A ship was wrecked upon the reefs of an island in the Pacific. Fearing the inhabitants were savages a sailor climbed a cliff to reconnoiter, and soon shouted, "Come on! Here's a church!"

A lawyer going west boasted he would locate where there were no churches or Bibles. He found such a place, but before a year wrote a class-mate to come out and start preaching, adding, "A place without Bibles and Sabbaths is too much like hell for any living man to stay in."

Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And, unawares, morality expires.—*Pope*.

Success does not always bring happiness. Vers. 15, 16.—Success is full of promise till men get it; then it is a last year's nest from which the bird has flown.

When Timon, famed for his misanthropy, saw Alcibiades conducted home with honor from the place of assembly, he did not shun him as he did others, but, shaking him by the hand, said: "Go on, my boy, and prosper, for your prosperity will bring on the ruin of all this crowd."

John Jacob Astor, the millionaire, who raised himself from poverty, when on his dying bed asked for paper and a pencil and wrote, "My life has been a failure."

Ivy clings to wood or stone and hides the ruin that it feeds upon.—*Cowper*.

Look to the helm, good master; many a shoal
Marks this stern coast, and rocks where sits the siren,
Who, like ambition, lures men to their ruin.—*Scott*.

Beware what earth calls happiness; beware
All joys but joys that never can expire;
Who builds on less than an immortal base,
Fond as he seems, condemns his joy to death.—*Young*.

Retribution will surely follow sin.—A bishop said to Louis XI. of France, "Make an iron cage for those who do not think as we do—an iron cage in which the captive can neither lie down nor stand upright." After a while the bishop offended the king, and for fourteen years he was confined in that same cage.—*Talmage*.

In a Scottish castle a man murdered a young bridegroom at whose marriage festivities he had just assisted. The assassin took horse and fled through the woods. Next morning he emerged from a thicket and found himself in front of the castle whence he had fled. He was captured and condemned to death.

A bag of gold was found bound round the neck of a robber who had stolen it from a steamer. His treasure sank him.

Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks it.—*Shakespeare*.

So comes a reckoning when the banquet's o'er,
The dreadful reckoning, and men smile no more.—*Gay*.

TEACHING HINTS.

There are in this lesson four pictures with which the teachings of the story may be connected.

1. **Naboth and Ahab.** Vers. 1-3. Notice Naboth's sturdy independence, the spirit of a free citizen against a king. It would show that the old constitution of the commonwealth was still recognized, and that the people possessed rights upon which not even a king could trespass. Naboth uses the name "Jehovah," and shows an acquaintance with the law of Moses, which suggests that he was one of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

2. **Ahab and Jezebel.** Vers. 4-7. Ahab was not so aggressively wicked as he was weak in character. When with Elijah he was dominated by Elijah's stronger personality; and when with Jezebel he yields to her influence. Jezebel was the power behind the throne. Notice how completely she governs Ahab. In the last lesson we saw that even Elijah, who feared no one else, dreaded her power.

3. **Jezebel and Naboth.** Vers. 8-14. If any evidence were required to show the absolute power of Queen Jezebel in Israel, and the entire lack of moral principle among the ruling classes, this event proves it. Tell the story, and let it point its own moral.

4. **Ahab in his Vineyard.** Vers. 15-19. Describe King Ahab walking through his vineyard when Elijah appears in sight. Include in the lesson verses 17-19, with the prophet's warning. Find from 2 Kings ix, 23, 26, who were witnesses of this interview, and how the prophet's prediction was fulfilled, not on Ahab himself, but on the body of his son.

5. **As an application of the lesson,** sum up the sins of Ahab and Jezebel. 1.) *Covetousness*. Explain both what it is not, what it is, and how it was manifested. 2.) *Discontent*. Ver. 4. Covetousness generally breeds an unhappy, dissatisfied spirit. 3.) *Conspiracy*. In which Ahab was an accessory after the fact, if not before. 4.) *Hypocrisy*. For all this was in the sacred name of religion. "Thou didst blaspheme God!" was one charge against Naboth. 5.) *Murder*. Show to what crime covetousness may lead. How often, even now, desire for the property of another ends in murder.

6. **Show in conclusion what an utter failure was Ahab's wicked endeavor.** He obtained Naboth's vineyard, but see what wretchedness he obtained with it: guilt, rebuke, foreshadowings of doom, and a dread of divine wrath. It is said that a duke of Austria once hired some men to murder an enemy, and then paid them in counterfeit coin, saying, "False money is good enough for false knaves." So Ahab was paid when he sold himself to work evil.

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LESSON VII.—February 15.

ELIJAH TAKEN TO HEAVEN.—2 KINGS 2. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.—Gen. 5. 24.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—896 B. C. The insertion of this incident here would appear, from 2 Chron. 21. 12-15, to be a departure from strict chronological order. Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, is still alive, and in the next chapter we shall find an account of his expedition in conjunction with Jehoram of Israel against the Moabites. In the passage just cited, however, the chronicler tells of a letter which Elijah sent to Jehoram of Judah (the son of Jehoshaphat) evidently after his father's death. Jehoram had ascended the throne of his father, and had slain all his brethren with the sword, and was walking in the ways of the northern kings, of the house of Ahab. The letter was to warn him of the punishment which awaited his evil deeds. The father must have been dead before one brother would slay the rest of the family. The margin of the Authorized Version in 2 Chron. 21. 12 describes Elijah's letter as "writ before his death," apparently with the meaning that it was prepared by prophetic foreknowledge, and sent by some one else when the time came that its warning was needed. It seems much more likely that the compiler of Kings decided to make his history of Elijah complete before he went on to other matters, and has by so doing put the final scene of the prophet's earthly life a little earlier than its chronological place in the history.—*Cambridge Bible*. The following event certainly belongs to the time after the death of Ahaziah (chap. 1. 17), and probably to the beginning of the reign of Jehoram, for with the 19th verse the public activity of Elisha begins; that is, the time when he stepped into the place of Elijah, and stood at the head of the prophets. The war with the Moabites, in which Elisha assumes so important a position (comp. chap. 3.) must have begun soon after Jehoram's succession to the throne. Chap. 1. 1.—*Lange*.

PLACES.—1. *Gilgal*. This Gilgal cannot be identical with the place of that name on the east of Jericho, where Joshua first encamped after passing the Jordan (Josh. 4. 19), but the modern Jiljilia, on a lofty eminence about half-way between Jerusalem and Shechem. Here, in Elijah's time, there seems to have been a school of the prophets.—*Terry*. 2. *Bethel*. 3. *Jericho*. 4. *The River Jordan*. 5. *The region beyond*, the "land of Gilead," which was Elijah's birthplace (1 Kings 17. 1), and whither we find the prophet's first flight directed (1 Kings 17. 38), became the scene of his ascension.

RULERS.—1. *Jehoram*, grandson of Ahab, King of Israel, 2. *Jehoram*, son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Ahab, "which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up, and who did very abominably in following idols," seems to have become penitent in his later years; he was killed in a war with the Syrians 897 B. C. He was succeeded by his son Amaziah, who died 896 B. C. Shortly after the death of this king, and the accession of his son Jehoram or Joram, came the events of our lesson.

Authorized Version.

1 And it came to pass, when the LORD would ¹ take up E-li'jah into heaven by a whirlwind, that E-li'jah went with E-li'sha ² from Gil'gal.

Revised Version.

1 And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up E-li'jah by a whirlwind into heaven, that E-li'jah went with

¹ Gen. 5, 24; Heb. 11, 5.—² 1 Kings 19, 21.

I. THE JOURNEY. Verses 1-8.



1. When the Lord would take up Elijah—There was a set time in Jehovah's purpose when this great miracle should be wrought. It was an event of importance to all ages. Into heaven—Literally, *the heavens*. Into what heaven? Does it merely mean the sky, where the birds fly and the clouds float? That would be a supposition unworthy of the sublime transaction. The only rational interpretation of the words involves the doctrine that Elijah ascended to the heavenly abode of the saints of God.—*Terry*. The Hebrews believed there were three heavens, in the highest of which was God's throne. A whirlwind—A storm, a tempest. This was the immediate instrumentality or agent by which he was

taken up. The writer uses the word which most nearly describes the manifestation of these heavenly forces. Human speech must, of course, fail to convey a true picture of so sublime a scene.—*Bible Commentary*. With Elisha—Elisha seems to have had a revelation, or at least a premonition, that his master was about to be taken away from him, and no dread of that final parting could deter him from the mournful joy of seeing with his own eyes the last moments, and of hearing with his own ears the last words, of the prophet of God.—*Stanley*. No mention of Elisha as Elijah's companion is given in the history between the day of Elisha's call and these events. But in 1 Kings 19, 21, we read that Elisha "ministered unto" Elijah, and in 2 Kings 3, 11, he is called "Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah;" that is, who performed for the aged prophet such services as a young attendant could yield to his master. We may therefore conclude that Elisha's time had been mainly spent in Elijah's company.—*Bähr*. From Gilgal—See note on Places in Introduction. At the time when he was to be translated Elijah was probably dwelling among the prophetic body, and passed "from Gilgal" to the other two centers, Bethel and Jericho, that to them he might leave the precious memory of a visit on the last day when he was seen on earth.—*Lange*. For a meet farewell to the earth Elijah will go visit the schools of the prophets before his departure. These were in his way; of any part of earth they were nearest unto heaven.—*Bishop Hall*.

The dawn of heaven is sometimes foreseen. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Mere moods are not to be depended on; nor are we to presumptuously expect premonitions from God; nevertheless it was not mere poetic fancy that led that rare writer, Bunyan, to place the land of Beulah so near to the river of death. Not unfrequently is the dawn of heavenly happiness clearly seen by aged saints.

The reward of heaven fully compensates for all earthly trials. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Perfect reward and complete punishment are unattainable here. Our sins may find us out on earth and our good deeds be rewarded; but the deepest meaning of our moral decisions cannot be revealed in time; and clear beyond the richest spiritual joy attainable here remains the perfect felicity of heaven.

Turning whirlwinds into triumphal chariots. Of all storms the most dreaded are cyclones. The ruin they work is complete; but it was by some such awful means that God took his favored servant up to his eternal reward; and the ancient prophet's experience may well be taken as a type of later providential dealings with mankind. All is not lost because a storm comes. That which seems to work evil, as well as that which attracts us, is the servant of God. All forces of nature are "ministering spirits," and we are not to believe that God has deserted us simply because a whirlwind comes. Many a saint has been conveyed to heaven by the whirlwind of financial disaster, or of persecution, or of acute physical disease, who could never have got there by any chariot more pleasant.

Authorized Version.

2 And E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Tarry 'here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth'-el. And E-li'sha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as 'thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth'-el.

Revised Version.

2 E-li'sha from Gil'gal. And E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me as far as Beth-el. And E-li'sha said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they

^a Ruth 1. 15, 16.—^c 1 Sam. 1. 26; chap. 4. 20.

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?—*Watts.*

The virtue of silence. Men do not often blunder by "holding their peace;" and if their reticence should prove to be an error it can in almost every case be rectified; but there is no cure for injudicious words, and the great majority of blunders are those made by the tongue.

2. Tarry here—We can see, in Elijah's repeated request that Elisha should stay behind, how awful the immediate future appeared to him, and in Elisha's persistence the great love which the disciple felt for his master. Elijah, feeling that soon he was to stand before God, and was drawing near to the gate of heaven, would save his disciple from the sight of the glory on which man, as the Jew felt, cannot gaze and live; while Elisha is resolved that nothing but the last necessity shall take him from his master's side.—*Cambridge Bible.* The Lord hath sent me—The whole journey has been divinely marked out for him.—*Lumby.* As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth—The combination of the two phrases imparts much solemnity to the resolve. They are not unfrequently found apart. Thus: "As the Lord liveth" occurs alone in Judg. 8. 19; Ruth 3. 13; 1 Sam. 14. 39, etc.; and "As thy soul liveth" in 1 Sam. 1. 26; 17. 55; 2 Sam. 14. 19, etc. Besides the places in this chapter the double form is found in 1 Sam. 20. 3; 25. 26, and is expressive of the most intense earnestness. Elisha's master may be withdrawn from him; he will not be withdrawn from his master.—*Cambridge Bible.* Elijah wished to pay a farewell visit to the schools of the prophets, which lay on his way to the place of the ascension; and at the same time, probably from a feeling of humility and modesty, he desired to be in solitude, where there would be no eye-witnesses of his glorification.—*Bible Commentary.*

The strength of true affection. "I will not leave thee." See ILLUSTRATIONS.

They sin who tell us love can die.—*Southey.*

Going where the Lord sends. When a man knows he is obeying God's direction he neither fears nor vacillates. Thousands of Israelites in those days were in apprehension of robbers, of mistakes in judgment, of misfortunes in their business affairs. Elijah had none of these; the Lord had sent him, and where he was sent he went. "Man is immortal till his work is done."

Silence is sometimes the most effective sympathy. See ILLUSTRATIONS. This is a good truth to teach, but it is a better truth to practice. There are few teachers and few parents who cannot greatly intensify the love of the children under their care by remembering that silent sympathy is sometimes the best expressed.

Knowledge is power. See ILLUSTRATIONS. More and more completely is the Christian Church recognizing the inestimable value of education. It is the only means by which a man's intellectual forces can be greatly multiplied. Let us impress this truth deeply on the minds of our pupils. What the schools of the prophets did for ancient Israel our institutions of higher learning should do for America.

One step at a time. "The Lord hath sent me to Beth-el, . . . to Jericho, . . . to Jordan." Elijah may have had an indistinct understanding of what he was to do, but God knew the end from the beginning. Notice how he reveals his plans. From Horeb to Abel-meholah; from Abel-meholah to Samaria; from Samaria to the Ekron highway; thence to Gilgal; from Gilgal to Beth-el; from Beth-el to Jericho; from Jericho to the region beyond Jordan—little by little the pathway is revealed. So God knows your future, teacher, and the future of each of your pupils; but

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.—*Cowper.*

Authorized Version.

3 And 'the sons of the prophets that were at Beth'-el came forth to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

4 And E-li'jah said unto him, E-li'sha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jer'i-cho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jer'i-cho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jer'i-cho came to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And E-li'jah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jord'an. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the

Revised Version.

3 went down to Beth'-el. And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth'-el came forth to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

4 And E-li'jah said unto him, E-li'sha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jer'i-cho. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So

5 they came to Jer'i-cho. And the sons of the prophets that were at Jer'i-cho came near to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And E-li'jah said unto him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jord'an. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.

7 And they two went on. And fifty

*1 Sam. 19. 20; 1 Kings 20. 22; chap. 4. 1, 22; chap. 9. 1.

3. **The sons of the prophets** are the pupils or disciples of the prophets; not necessarily their sons in a literal sense.—*Bähr*. Here, at the very place where the calf-worship of Jeroboam was chiefly observed, there existed a school of prophets. Their zeal and devotion to the true God of Israel perhaps served largely to counteract the prevalent idolatry, and preserve among the hosts of the people a faithful seven thousand.—*Terry*. Whether the prophetic body in Gilgal had been warned before Elijah's departure from them that they would see him no more we are not told; but it seems highly probable that it was so from what is said of Bethel and of Jericho. Thus Elisha started on his journey prepared for what its end would be. **Came forth to Elisha**—The solemn event of which they may have been forewarned checks them from addressing Elijah. His thoughts must have been all absorbed in meditation on the revelation which he was so soon to experience, and heaven, not earth nor the things of earth, was in his mind. Silence when God is so near is the only homage men can pay.—*Cambridge Bible*. **The Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day**—Scholars sat at the feet of their master, who was thus over their heads. Acts 22. 3. We can see from this language that the communion between Elijah and Elisha had been much closer than that which the aged prophet had held with the other sons of the prophets. Hence he is rather spoken of as Elisha's master than theirs. This is what we should expect from the special way in which Elisha was appointed. 1 Kings 19. 16. The prophetic bodies were, therefore, prepared to accept Elisha as their head when Elijah had been taken away.—*Lumby*. The separation touched Elisha nearest of all, and was more important for him than for any of the rest.—*Lange*. **Hold ye your peace**—The subject is too solemn for words.

4, 5, 6. **Jericho**—The largest city in the valley of the Jordan. **Jordan**—The journey tends across the river to that part of the country whither Elijah had at first fled for fear of Ahab.—*Lumby*.

7, 8. **Fifty men**—It is surprising to come at one single center upon so large a body of men devoting themselves to a holy life in the service of Jehovah while Ahab's children are still on the throne. It would almost appear as though all [or most] of those who were true adherents of the Lord had betaken themselves to this life of retirement to escape from the evils which followed so

Authorized Version.

prophets went, and stood 'to view afar off: and they two stood by Jor'dan.

8 And E-li'jah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they 'were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And

Revised Version.

men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood over against them afar off: and they two stood by Jor'dan. And E-li'jah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee. And

c In sight, or, over against.—^d Exod. 14. 21; Josh. 2. 14.

¹ Or, as they went.

thick in the train of the worship of the Baalim.—*Cambridge Bible*. Went, and stood to view—Probably on an elevation, from which they could see whether and in what way the departing ones would get over Jordan at a place where there was no arrangement for crossing. They followed out of anxiety, not that they might be eye-witnesses of the removal of their master, for, according to verse 10, it was not certain that even Elisha, who accompanied him, would see this. They were witnesses only of that which is narrated in verse 8.—*Bähr*. They two stood by Jordan—Elijah's last duty was a test of his spiritual strength. He was to build for himself, by an act of faith, the path to his glorious end, and so impress indelibly upon the hearts of his friends and followers that no other way than faith in God's promises leads to the higher and better inheritance in light.—*Manken*. Mantle—His sheep-skin, says the *Septuagint*. The skins of beasts, dressed with the hair on, were formerly worn by prophets and priests as the simple insignia of their office. As the civil authority was often lodged in the hands of such persons, particularly among the Jews, mantles of this kind were used by kings and high civil officers when they bore no sacred character. The custom continues to the present day; a lamb's-skin hood or cloak is the badge which certain graduates in English universities wear; and the royal robes of kings and great officers of State are adorned with the skins of the animal called the ermine.—*Clarke*. Wrapped it together—Making thus a sort of roll or rod, and reminding us by his action of Moses, who smote with his rod the waters of the Nile (Exod. 7. 17, 20) when they were to be turned into blood.—*Lumby*. The miraculous power is no more attached, in any magical way, to Elijah's mantle than it was to the staff of Moses; but it is the prophetic calling which God has armed with such power for the attainment of his ends, as was shown immediately afterward in the case of the successor and representative of Elijah. Comp. vers. 14, 19, etc.—*Lange*.

No obstacle can hinder God or God's children. See ILLUSTRATIONS. On the other side of the Jordan is the place of the glorification of the prophet. Between him and this spot there flows a broad and deep stream. Through this he must go. There is no bridge, no ferry-man; but he does not despair. The God who has called him to the other side will help him thither. Such incidents occur to many on the pilgrimage of life. No stream is so deep, and no flood or calamity so dangerous, that God cannot lead through it unharmed. The prophet-mantle, which to-day, as ever, when it falls upon Jordan, divides its waves, is faith—strong, glad, living, rock-arm faith. Faith leads through fire and flood.—*Wirth*.

The master idea strong till the end of life. Ver. 8. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Elijah's lingering among the schools of the prophets is indicative of his tastes. It is of vital importance that in the formative period of life the proper ideas and preferences should be fixed. What a young man and a young woman are between fifteen and twenty-five, they will be, in all human probability, during the last decade of their lives.

God turns all stumbling-blocks into stepping stones for his providence. Ver. 8 The Jordan and the Dead Sea, which are men's frontiers and boundary lines, are God's pathways. The arid rocks are by him turned into fountains, and those things which to human foresight would seem to guarantee destruction are made vehicles of choicest blessings.

II. THE REQUEST.—Verses 9, 10.

9, 10. Ask what I shall do for thee—Spoken by a spiritual father to one whom he regards as a son. Elisha had maintained his attachment, love, and fidelity to the very end. Before I be taken away—Noticeable words, never to be cited as a support of the Roman Catholic dogma

Authorized Version.

E-li'sha said, I pray thee, let a 'double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, 'Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see 'me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* 'a chariot of fire, and horses of

Revised Version.

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11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* 'a chariot of fire, and

* Num. 11. 17-25.—^bThou hast done hard in asking.—^cActs 1. 10.—^dChap. 6. 17; Ps. 68. 17; 104. 4; Heb. 1. 7, 14.

* That is, the portion of the first born; See Deut. 21. 17.—^eOr, *chariots*.

of the effectual mediation of the saints in heaven.—*Lange*. The departing Elijah consciously carries with him into heaven the sympathies and memories of earth. After his departure he will be no less Elijah than before, and he will remember and think of Elisha no less than Elisha will of him; but there will be no more personal communion between them; and so what Elisha has to ask must be asked before Elijah departs, for there may be no requests made of the saints after they are gone from earth.—*Terry*. A double portion—Elisha asks, like a first-born son, for a "double portion" of that spiritual power which was in the truest sense Elijah's riches. According to the Mosaic law (Deut. 21. 17) the first-born son received, of what the father left behind, two parts; twice as much as the other sons received. Elisha begs that Elijah will regard him as his first-born.—*Bähr*. The attempts which have been made to show that in some ways Elisha surpassed Elijah are utterly pointless. What Elisha longs for is to be full heir to the prophetic offices and gifts of his master.—*Cambridge Bible and Bible Commentary*. A hard thing—An extraordinary blessing which I cannot, and God only can, give. Nevertheless he, doubtless by the unrecorded direction of the Spirit, proposed to Elisha a sign, the observation of which would keep him in the attitude of an anxious waiter as well as suppliant for the favor.—*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*. But Elijah's prayer to God might be largely instrumental in procuring it as a divine gift to Elisha. The fervent prayer (Jas. 5. 16, 17) that brought abundant showers from heaven (1 Kings 18. 42-45) might also bring gifts of the Spirit. The passage clearly shows that Elijah was to be somehow instrumental in procuring for Elisha his desire.—*Terry*. If . . . it shall be so—Elijah means to say: If it is granted to thee alone, of all the sons of the prophets, to remain with me until my removal, and to be a witness of it, then thou mayest know, by this fact, that thou art to continue the prophetic work which I have begun, and which I must now abandon, and then shalt thou also receive that measure of the prophetic spirit of which thou hast need for this work.—*Bähr*.

Elisha's desire to be like Elijah. Ver. 9. See ILLUSTRATIONS. All of the lessons of childhood, and most of the lessons of youth, are learned by imitation. The baby imitates every thing he sees. As boys and girls grow up through the early years of moral responsibility they have to make choices as to which courses of action they will imitate, and choice determines character. Ask your class which sort of people they are imitating—the giddy and self-indulgent, or the earnest and God-fearing? and if called upon to make a request, as Elisha was, what would they choose—the things of this fleeting world, or spiritual and heavenly things? There was only one heir of Elijah's prophetic power—perhaps because there was only one applicant.

Spiritual blessings are the gift of God. Ver. 10. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Earthly ties must be severed. Ver. 9. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. THE CHARIOT OF FIRE. Verse 11.

11. A chariot of fire, and horses of fire—Precisely what the chronicler meant us to understand by this verse has been a source of controversy. The best commentators differ in their understanding of the details. The great basal fact is not in dispute that Elijah was removed from earth by a miracle. Some bright effulgence, which, in the eyes of the spectators, resembled these objects.—*Bible Commentary*. These horses and chariots were creations of the spiritual world; a part of that divine machinery by which God consummates the purposes of his wisdom and providence. There are not only angels in heaven, but horses and chariots ready to do the bidding of the Most

Authorized Version.

fire, and parted them both asunder; and E-li'jah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Revised Version.

horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and E-li'jah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

High. This heavenly scene which Elisha witnessed was no hallucination, nor were the chariot and horses of fire a mere ideal symbol seen only in vision, like the living creatures which Ezekiel saw by the river Chebar (Ezek. 1. 5-14), but they had actual existence in the spiritual world, and were only a part of that vast host, the sound of whose movements David once heard over the mulberry-trees (2 Sam. 5. 24), and who at a later time filled the mountains round about Elisha. Chap. 6. 17. Why should we doubt this as a fact of the unseen world when we are told (Psa. 68. 17) that the chariots of God are *two myriads, repeated thousands*, and they that minister unto him are thousand thousands, and they that stand before him are myriad myriads. Dan. 7. 10.—*Terry*. Went up by a whirlwind into heaven—The moment the fiery chariot separated the two prophets a sudden tempest broke upon Elijah and carried him aloft into heaven. It is not said that Elijah went up in the fire-chariot, but in the tempest, the chariot serving to separate Elijah from Elisha, as if defining a boundary between the earthly and the heavenly states. It has been usually and very naturally assumed, however, that the translated prophet ascended in the chariot, and the chariot was borne aloft on the wings of the wind. Comp. Psa. 104. 3. The heaven to which Elijah went was the abode of God's saints, who rest from their earthly labors, but employ themselves in higher and holier works than it enters our minds to conceive. There he met with Moses, who had died and was buried not far from the place whence he ascended; and with that elder prophet he afterward descended from his heavenly home to appear to the three disciples, and to talk with Jesus of his exit from the world. Luke 9. 30, 31. This translation of Elijah to heaven, and the appearance of the chariot and horses of fire, like other similar events of Old Testament Scripture, teach the existence of another world beyond us, unseen by the natural eye; a realm whose inhabitants and hierarchies and orders of ministries are numerous beyond all computation. But Elijah entered his heaven without tasting death, or at least by a marvelous transformation. The human body, with its earthly modes of life, must be unsuited to the heavenly state, and hence we suppose, in harmony with other Scripture, that at the moment of his separation from Elisha, Elijah was changed, as in the twinkling of an eye, and ascended with a renewed, spiritualized body, made compatible with the nature of heavenly existence. Thus has he become a representative of those saints who shall not die, but be changed at the coming of the Lord. 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52; 1 Thess. 4. 17. It is contrary to the evident import of this account of Elijah's departure, and contrary to the teachings of other Scriptures, to assume that his body must have become suddenly decomposed and dissolved into dust, or that it was thrown down again, as some of the sons of the prophets thought (ver. 16), on some mountain, or in some valley, a lifeless corpse. Elijah truly ascended bodily to heaven, but his body underwent such a spiritualizing change as fitted it for the heavenly life; hence our doctrine that man is all immortal—body as well as spirit.—*Terry*.

Safety in heaven is the perfect outcome of human life which leaves nothing to be regretted.

When he had reached the celestial heights, what difference did it make to Elijah that he would have starved had not the raven fed him? To what little importance must have shrunk his experience at the brook Cherith, his flight to Horeb, his mental depression, and his exposure to the fiery whirlwind! It is the arrival at their haven, and not the storms through which they pass, that determines the success of the mariners. "So he bringeth them to their desired haven."

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.—*Whittier*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Premonitions of approaching departure. Ver. 1.—Dr. Arnold's last subject given to his pupils for exercise was, "The last house;" the last translation for Latin verses, Spenser on the death of Sidney; and the last words in his lecture on the New Testament, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," etc.

As birds feel the impulse of southern lands and speed to the realms of light, so may we feel the sweet solicitations of the life beyond and joyfully soar from chill and shadow to eternal summer.—*Beecher*.

Churchill in the unfinished *Journey* showed a strange sense of being near his end. It closes with the line: "I on my journey all alone proceed!" The poem was not meant to close here, but that was the last line he ever wrote.—*Timbs*.

I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which says I must not stay;
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away.—*Tickell*.

And coming events cast their shadows before.—*Campbell*.

O secret music! sacred tongue of God!
I hear thee calling to me and I come.—*Leland*.

God's reward compensates for all. Ver. 1.—A military gentleman once said to an old minister in Scotland, "If I had power over the pension list I would put you on half-pay for your faithful services." The minister replied, "Your master may put you off with half-pay, but my Master will not serve me so meanly. I expect a full reward."

Queen Victoria made her grandson Albert Victor a present at his christening. It consisted of a silver statuette of the Prince Consort. The prince is represented as Christian in the *Algrim's Progress* wearing the armor of God. The queen's justice to the memory of the humble Baptist preacher, who was sent to prison by Charles II., foreshadows the honor God will confer on the worthy.

There are great rewards like jewels in a crown, there are little rewards like diamond-dust; every achievement shall receive its own measure of recompense.

God's crumbs are better than the world's loaves.

Large was his bounty and his soul sincere;
Heaven did a recompense as largely send.—*Gray*.

And soon or late our Father makes
His perfect recompense to all.—*Whittier*.

He who flag'd not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing, only he,
His soul well knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts to eternal life.—*Matthew Arnold*.

The strength of true affection. Ver. 2.—Colonel Byrd, of Virginia, fell into the hands of the Cherokees and was condemned to death. In the tribe was a chief that had been his friend. At the approach of the executioners he threw himself upon the intended victim saying, "Before you can get at my friend you must kill me."

The ancient Thebans had a band of men in their army called "the holy band," consisting of men from various regiments joined in a bond of love, and sworn to live and die together.

When Napoleon was banished to Elba the ex-Empress Josephine exclaimed, "Napoleon is unfortunate, and alas! I am not permitted to share the sorrow with him."

Every soul ought to have its Westminster Abbey into which the great good are admitted. Love rules without sword, and binds without cord.—*Spurgeon*.

O friend! O best of friends! thy absence more
Than the impending night darkens the landscape o'er.—*Longfellow*.

The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel.—*Shakespeare*.

Two lovely berries molded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart.—*Shakespeare*.

So dear I love him that with him all deaths
I would endure, without him live no life.—*Milton*.

Great souls by instinct to each other turn,
Demand alliance, and in friendship burn.—*Addison*.

Silence is sometimes the fittest sympathy. Vers. 3, 5.—A lady visiting Fuseli the painter chatted so ceaselessly he could not get a word in edgewise. When she paused he said, "We had boiled mutton and turnips for dinner to-day." "What a strange observation!" she exclaimed. He replied, "It is as good as any thing you have said for the last two hours."

When Mendelssohn conducted a perfectly sympathetic band he would cease to move his baton. Like one entranced his spirit so swayed the musicians they vibrated to every pulse of his meaning as if under majestic control.—*Haweis*.

Some rocks are so flinty that iron wedges and heavy sledges fail to splinter the stubborn mass. The more effective plan is to cut grooves in the rock into which wooden wedges are tightly inserted. Water is then applied to these, causing the wood to swell, and splitting the solid rock from top to bottom.—*W. A. D.*

Like moonlight on a troubled sea, brightening the storm it cannot calm.

Silence, when nothing need be said, is the eloquence of discretion.—*Boswe.*

Silence in love betrays more woe
Than words, though ne'er so witty.
A beggar that is dumb you know
May challenge double pity.—*Sir W. Raleigh.*

O, well has it been said, that there is no
Grief like the grief which does not speak!—*Longfellow.*

I am dumb, as solemn sorrow ought to be;
Could my grief speak, the tale would have an end.—*Odway.*

The value of education. Vers. 3, 5, 7.—Dr. Judson once said, as he approached Madison University, "If I had a thousand dollars do you know what I would do with it?" The person asked supposed he would give it to foreign missions. "I would put it into an institution like that," pointing to the college. "Planting colleges is *planting seed-corn for the world.*"

A learned clergyman was thus accosted by an illiterate preacher who despised education. "Sir, you have been to college, I presume!" "Yes, sir!" was the reply. "I am thankful," said the former, "that the Lord opened my mouth without any learning." "A similar event," retorted the clergyman, "happened in Balaam's time."

Knowledge is power.—*Bacon.*

A good education is the best dowry.

When land is gone and money's spent;
Then learning is most excellent.
Though house and land be never got,
Learning will give what they cannot.—*Dickens.*

The last census in the United States shows over 5,000,000 over ten years of age who cannot read and 6,500,000 who cannot write. Of the 10,000,000 voters, one in five cannot write his name. There are 18,000,000 children and youths, but the average attendance at schools is only 6,000,000. In 24 cities from fifty to eighty-two per cent. of the children of a school age are not enrolled. New York has 114,000 not enrolled, and Chicago is worse.—*Joseph Cook.*

'Tis education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.—*Pope.*

Learning by study must be won,
'Twas ne'er entailed from son to son.—*Gay.*

Who loves not knowledge? who shall rail
Against her beauty? may she mix
With men and prosper! who shall fix
Her pillars? let her work prevail.—*Tennyson.*

No obstacle can hinder God or God's children. Ver. 8.—There is a legend that Nimrod took Abraham and cast him into a furnace of fire because he would not worship idols, but God changed the coals into a bed of roses.

There is a tradition among the Indians that Manaton was traveling in the invisible world and

came upon a hedge of thorns, then saw wild beasts glare upon him from the thicket, and after a while stood before an impassable river. As he determined to proceed the thorns turned out phantoms, the wild beasts a powerless ghost, and the river only a phantom. When we march on, obstacles disappear.—*Talmage*.

Look at that mountain-side! It is worse than perpendicular, it overhangs the lake; yet the Tyrolese have carried a road right along the bald face of the rock by chiseling out a groove or gallery. With God in front we soon leave difficulties in the rear.—*Spurgeon*.

Consciousness of divine aid came to *Stanley* as he wrestled with savage hordes in the depths of the African forest. He says: "I saw I was carrying out a higher will than mine. I endeavored to steer my course as direct as possible, but there was an unaccountable influence at the helm. Thanks be to God for ever and ever."

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to thee.—*Faber*.

The master idea strong till the end.—When Gordon, the celebrated California stage-driver, was dying, he put his foot out of the bed and swung it to and fro. When asked why he did so, he replied: "I am on the down-grade and cannot get my foot on the brake."

Christmas Evans had journeyed through Wales with horse and gig for twenty years. In his last moments, as mountain memories came over him, he waved his hand and said, "Good-bye! drive on."

The marshaling of armies was Napoleon's ruling passion, and in the delirium of his closing moments he fancied he was on the battle-field looking on and commanding.

Before Dr. Adam, rector of the High School, Edinburgh, died his mind wandered. He imagined himself in his class-room, and called aloud, "Now, boys, you may go. It's growing dark."—*Guthrie*.

Like the stone rolling down the hill-side and increasing its velocity till it plunges into the calm lake beneath, so ought it to be with life. The nearer the end the busier, until the grave with its rest for the weary closes over us.—*W. A. D.*

And you, brave Cobham! to the latest breath
Shall feel your ruling passion strong in death.—*Pope*.

While Enoch slumbered . . .
There came so loud a calling of the sea
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad,
Crying with a loud voice, "A sail! a sail!
I am saved;" and so fell back and spoke no more.—*Tennyson*.

Imitation is sometimes the sincerest praise. Ver. 9.—When Augustin Carracci gave a long discourse in honor of the Laocoön, all were astonished that his brother Annibal said nothing of that celebrated masterpiece. The latter took a piece of chalk and drew the group against the wall with great accuracy—a silent panegyric surpassing mere rhetoric.

Imitation of the object of worship is the highest form of worship. Many a teacher besides the Stoic philosopher has said, "He that copies the gods worships them adequately."—*Maclaren*.

Love took up the harp of life and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of self that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.—*Tennyson*.

I am a part of all that I have met.—*Tennyson*.

To know, to esteem, to love—and then to part
Makes up life's tale to many a feeling heart.—*Coleridge*.

Spiritual influence from unearthly source. Vers. 9, 10.—When a lecturer on electricity wants to show an example of a human body surcharged with his fire he observes two conditions: 1.) To place him on a stool with glass legs. This isolates him from the earth, so that the fluid does not pour through his frame but is retained as it enters. 2.) He is placed in direct

connection with the store-houses of electric power. Soon you are told he is charged, yet you see no fire. But putting your hand close to his person sparks shoot out. What a lesson in seeking spiritual power!—*W. A. D.*

Once a year the Nile overflows its banks. On the extent of the overflow depends the measure of the fertility of Egypt. The Nile depends on the lakes in the center of Africa for its supply, and these again on the melting of the snow by the sun's rays. So God is the ultimate source of power.—*Spurgeon.*

In 1808 the "Creation" was performed at Vienna. Haydn had to be wheeled to the theater in a chair. It was the last time he appeared in public. His presence roused intense enthusiasm in the audience. Tumultuous applause greeted the passage, "And there was light." The old composer rose to his feet and said, "No! not from me, but from heaven comes all."

Physically we know this earth is subject to the attraction of other planets; the orbit of the world in space is determined by the power of other worlds acting upon it. This is as true spiritually; the course of this world through time is determined by powers outside itself.

Now God be praised! that to believing souls
Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair.—*Shakespeare.*

Angels are round the good man to catch the incense of his prayers,
And they fly to minister kindness to those for whom he pleadeth.—*Tupper.*

Earthly ties must be severed. Ver. 11.—"I will restore thy daughter to life again," said an Eastern sage to a prince who grieved immoderately over the loss of a beloved child, "provided thou art able to engrave on her tomb the names of three persons who have never mourned."

A gardener had a flower of rare beauty in his charge. When it was approaching perfection some hand cut it from the stem. He was troubled till the *master* came and said, "I took it."

Heaven gives us friends, to bless the present scene,
Removes them, to prepare us for the next.—*Young.*

Friend after friend departs—
Who hath not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts
That finds not here an end.—*Montgomery.*

Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.—*Tennyson.*

I hold it true whate'er befall—
I feel it when I sorrow most.
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.—*Tennyson.*

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.—*Cowper.*

TEACHING HINTS.

1. The sublime life of Elijah is drawing to a close. Notice his achievements. He dealt to idolatry a crushing blow; for, though Baal worship continued, it never regained its former power. He established the schools of the prophets, which fostered the ancient religion and raised up many prophets in the succeeding generations. He prepared the way for the revolution which destroyed the house of Omri and established the house of Jehu upon the throne.

2. **New times demand new men.** The work of Elijah the destroyer was finished, and now the work of Elisha the builder is to open. Show how different were these two men, and yet how strong was the fellowship between them.

3. **Indicate on the map the journey of Elijah and Elisha** from Gilgal (not in the Jordan valley, but in the mountain region), to Bethel and to Jericho. Explain the motives and purpose of this journey, and its opportunities for communion and for counsel concerning the work dear to both of the prophets.

4. Call attention to "the sons of the prophets;" who they were; their association into communities; their work and worship, and their influence. Every Sunday-school should be a school of the prophets.

5. Describe the remarkable passage of the Jordan, while "the sons of the prophets stood to view afar off." What was the significance of this scene?

6. Notice Elisha's request, as an indication of his character. What would most men have asked for, if such a privilege had been accorded?

7. There is a significance in Elijah's answer, which seems to mean, "If your spiritual fellowship is so close, and your spiritual insight is so keen, as to see that which is invisible to other eyes, then you can inherit my power, and become my successor." Notice that "the sons of the prophets stood to view," but only "Elisha saw."

8. The rapture of Elijah may be taken as the picture of what takes place at every Christian's departure, if our spiritual sight were sharpened to behold it. We too may ascend where Elijah was borne by the fiery steeds.

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2. TO SERMONS AND ADDRESSES.—Vers. 10-12. *Elijah a Type of Christ and His Followers, Subjects of the Day*, J. H. NEWMAN. *Elijah's Ascension, Short Discourses*, W. JAY. *Rapture of Elijah*, BISHOP HALL. *Elijah's Translation to Heaven*, C. SIMEON. *Victory over Death*, ROBERTSON, iii, 240. *Happy in Life and Death*, MONOD. *Sudden Death*, DR. ARNOLD. *Spiritual Gifts not Discontinued*, DR. BUSHNELL. *Elijah*, ROBERTSON, ii, 106.

LESSON VIII.—February 22.

ELIJAH'S SUCCESSOR.—2 KINGS 2. 12-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.—Zech. 4. 6.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Following closely the date of the last lesson.

PLACES.—1. Jordan. 2. Jericho.

PERSONS.—In the Old Testament Elijah is rarely mentioned except in these chapters of the Books of Kings, yet from the way in which Malachi (4. 5, 6) foretells his coming again, we can see that the character of his mission had been fully appreciated. It was suited for times when God might be expected to come and smite the earth with a curse, if men repented not. Elijah was mighty rather in works than in words. In later days he was deemed to be ever interested in the spiritual welfare of the Lord's people, and a place was set for him at every circumcision service. We can see how his ministry of help was in all men's minds from the mistake which was made at the crucifixion, when our Lord's cry of agony was interpreted into a call for Elijah. The large place which Elijah filled in the thoughts of the Jews of our Lord's day is shown by the mention in the New Testament of his name and his work more



frequently than those of any other prophet. For such a prophet men were looking in those evil days which preceded the coming of Christ. "Art thou Elijah?" was the first question of those who saw and heard John the Baptist (John 1. 21), and Jesus pointed out to his disciples that the office of Elijah was truly fulfilled by the Baptist. Matt. 11. 14. The "taking up" of Elijah was accepted by the Jews as a testimony of the doctrine of man's immortality. "Blessed are they that saw thee," says the writer of Ecclesiasticus; "for we shall surely live." Hence the great fitness of the appearance of Elijah with Moses at our Lord's transfiguration.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Authorized Version.

12 And E-li'sha saw it, and he cried, 'My father, my father! the chariot of Is'ra-el, and the horsemen thereof! And he 'saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and 'rent them in two pieces.

13 He took up also the mantle of E-li'-jah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the 'bank of Jor'dan;

14 And he took the mantle of E-li'jah

Revised Version.

12 And E-li'sha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the 'chariots of Is'ra-el and the horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent

13 them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of E li'jah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by 14 the bank of Jor'dan. And he took

¹ Chap. 12. 14.—² Acts 1. 9.—³ Gen. 37. 29, 34; Josh. 7. 6.
—⁴ Llp.

¹ Or, chariot.

I. A PROPHETIC TOKEN. Verses 12-14.

12. *My father*—This title of affection was given by the younger prophets to their elders. See 1 Sam. 10. 12, where the question, "Who is their father?" appears to refer to Samuel. Here its use suits perfectly with the request just made for the first-born's share.—*Cambridge Bible*. The chariot . . . and the horsemen—The standing army of the nation. This man had done more for the preservation and prosperity of Israel than all her warriors.—*Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown*. He saw him no more—The moment when the fiery blast, the storm-cloud, separated them from each other, he disappeared suddenly from his eyes.—*Lange*. Took hold of his own clothes, and rent them—He would fain have gone with Elijah into heaven. He had closely followed his master all day, persistently refusing to leave him; and now, when he suddenly finds himself alone, grief prevails over every other feeling, and Oriental demonstrativeness is uncontrollable even in the lonely gorges of Gilead.—*Terry*.

One strong heart is equal to an army. Hundreds of fortresses for defense and thousands of chariots and horsemen for aggression would not have been equivalent to this lonely prophet. The old Greeks said, "Better an army of stags with a lion for a leader, than an army of lions with a stag for a leader." "How many do you count me for?" asked Alexander the Great of a private soldier who was contrasting the smallness of the Greek forces with the great numbers of their enemy. This truth takes practical force and is capable of personal application when we recall the fact that one may be strong spiritually if he desires so to be. Not all boys and girls have an equal endowment of moral strength, but it is to be had from the courts of heaven for the asking. And whether one goes through the world as a potent force for righteousness, or as a weakling carried about by every wind that blows, depends largely on his choice.

It is no sin to mourn in bereavement. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Jesus wept when he saw Martha's tears because of Lazarus's death, and the most Christly characters weep with those that weep instead of harshly condemning natural sorrow.

13, 14. He took up also the mantle—As a sort of pledge of the promise which had been made to him.—*Lumby*. Smote the waters—"As if he had said: Lord God, it was thy promise to me by my departed master, that if I should see him in his last passage, a double portion of his spirit should be upon me. I followed him with my eyes in that fire and whirlwind; now, therefore, O God, make good thy gracious word unto thy servant; make this the first proof of the miraculous power wherewith thou shalt endow me. Let Jordan give the same way to me as it gave to my master."—*Bishop Hall*. It was not the mantle but the spirit of Elijah by virtue of

Authorized Version.

that fell from him, and smote 'the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of E-li'jah? And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and E-li'sha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jer'i-cho saw him, they said, The spirit of E-li'jah doth rest on E-li'sha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

16 And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty

Revised Version.

the mantle of E-li'jah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD, 'the God of E-li'jah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they were divided hither and thither: and E-li'sha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which were at Jer'i-cho over against him saw him, they said, The spirit of E-li'jah doth rest on E-li'sha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy serv-

4 John 14. 12.

*Or, the God of Elijah, even he? and when he had smitten, etc.

which Eliasha divided the water and went through the Jordan.—*Lange.* Where is the Lord God of Elijah?—Rather, *Jehovah, Elijah's God, where is he?* Eliasha had been assured that if permitted to see his master to the very last he should inherit his prophetic spirit and miracle-working powers. The condition seems to have been met, and he now reverently felt about for the power. A few hours ago a great miracle had been wrought in his presence. Here were the same waters of Jordan on his way, and the same mantle with which to smite them. All that is needed to repeat the miracle and demonstrate his inheritance of the prophetic spirit is the presence of the Lord God of Elijah.

God will take care of his cause. Pious Israelites would naturally consider Elijah's removal an irremediable loss to God's cause. But already his successor was appointed, and the divine work of reform went on. In hours of trial and bereavement, weak Christians are apt to conclude that God's cause is badly defeated, and stronger Christians are tempted to carry the whole responsibility for the apparent disaster on their own hearts instead of passing it over to God. But we who are trying to be good are, after all, only private soldiers in God's army. He is the general; it is his cause. He cannot be defeated, and we are not in a position to estimate the relative advantage of forward and backward movements.

God guides. See ILLUSTRATIONS. And in the guiding he will give providential tokens sufficient for us. How much the mantle of Elijah was to Eliasha we never can know. It was a boon that he had not expected. We likewise in our hours of gloom, if we trust in God, will find, coming just in the emergency, the strength without which we will be vanquished.

Confidence in one's mission. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Invincible confidence in God in the first place, and firm confidence in one's self in the second, will turn any boy or girl into a really great man or woman in spite of the shabbiest environments. It is astonishing how like sheep the majority of men are, without any independent judgment, going in flocks, following the merest chance leadership, and swinging from one leader to another without decision. Of very few men can it be said that they steer anywhere on the ocean of life. They simply drift, and are at the mercy of every wave and current. If you can lead your Sunday-school scholars to the inestimable duty of decision of character, you will have given them the greatest boon within human reach, except only that of eternal life. Get your class, if it has reached the age of thirteen, to read John Foster's *Decision of Character*, and if a year has passed since you read it yourself, read it over again.

God changes not. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Eliasha had firm faith in God, or he would not have hazarded this test; and yet the very fact that his prayer is molded into a question, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? gives us a glimpse of the anxiety with which he watched to find out where God was. But he need not have been anxious.

II. THE PROPHETIC SPIRIT. Verses 15-18.

15-18. When the sons of the prophets . . . saw him—The prophets saw all that was done at Jordan, and were thereby confirmed in the belief that Eliasha was the divinely ordained successor of Elijah.—*Terry.* Bowed themselves to the ground—Thus expressing their acknowledgment of him as their head, and the divinely appointed successor of Elijah.—*Lumby.* It was not the outside of Elijah which they had been wont to stoop unto with so much veneration;

Authorized Version.

'strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

17 And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jer'i-cho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

Revised Version.

ants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley.

17 And he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And they came back to him, while he tarried at Jer'i-cho; and he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

bScenes of strength.—⁵¹ Kings 18, 19; Ezek. 3, 8; Acts 3, 20.
cOne of the mountains.

it was his spirit, which since they now find in another subject, they entertain with equal reverence. No envy, no emulation, raiseth up their stomachs against Elijah's servant; but where they see eminent graces they are willingly prostrate.—*Bishop Hall.* Let them go—They appear to have thought that Elijah's corpse might be discovered somewhere. Seek thy master—Throughout the narrative there is implied a much closer connection between Elijah and Elisha than between Elijah and the rest. He is "thy master," not "our master."—*Cambridge Bible.* Cast—And yet could they think that God would send such a chariot and horses, for a less voyage than heaven!—*Bishop Hall.* Ye shall not send—There could be no doubt in Elisha's mind about the taking up of the body of his master. The garment left as a symbol of the granted petition was all that had fallen to the ground. But though he described, as no doubt he did, the glory which he had beheld and the way in which his master was translated, the sons of the prophets could not be moved from their notion that the body of Elijah might somewhere be discovered, and it is easy to understand how they would desire to give it reverent burial if it were to be found.—*Cambridge Bible.* Ashamed—Implies that Elisha was at a loss how to refuse them any longer. His narrative was unprecedented in its character, and if they refused to be persuaded by that, he had no more that he could do.—*Lumby.* Found him not—They turn back as wise as they went. Some men are best satisfied when they have wearied themselves in their own ways. Nothing will teach them wit but disappointments.—*Bishop Hall.*

How to find the right leader. It is refreshing to find in that age of corruption a body of young men who selected from all the population the only man on whom "the spirit of Elijah doth rest." Their old leader has gone to heaven, and they are willing to follow the man who most largely inherits his spirit. Are we as wise as they? Why are you a Methodist or a Baptist, a Republican or a Democrat? Do you follow leadership in Church and politics because of the high "spirit" manifested by the cause or the leader? If you do, and have exercised your best judgment in the fear of God, personally you are right, whatever the outcome may be. But if you do you are rarely unlike your neighbors, for most men inherit their politics from their fathers and their religion (if they have any) from their mothers. Let us by example teach our scholars reverence for God's principles and willingness to follow those who represent them.

It is by their "spirit" that men are tested in this world. They put on good clothes to look like gentlemen; they assume certain forms of politeness for the same reason. They choose their home associations, their pictures, and their books largely for the sake of pleasantly affecting their neighbors. Meanwhile their neighbors are looking beyond and through all these environments and courtesies and clothes, and are judging them by "what spirit they are of."

The folly of doubt. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It is a solemn question whether the unpardonable sin is not, in its last analysis, want of firm faith in God. If God does not govern adequately there is no use trying to do right. But God rules, and that being taken into account, there is absolutely nothing so foolish as doubt. It tends to every evil; and the cure is largely in our own hands. Most of us cannot be rich, no matter how much we desire or seek wealth; some of us can never regain health. We cannot be as strong as we would choose to be intellectually, financially, socially, or physically; but how strong in faith and purpose we are, depends simply on ourselves.

Authorized Version.

19 And the men of the city said unto E-li'sha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water ^e is naught, and the ground ^f barren.

20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and ^g cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of E-li'sha which he spake.

Revised Version.

19 And the men of the city said unto E-li'sha, Behold, we pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the land ^h miscarrieth.

20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they

21 brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast salt therein, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence

22 any more death or ⁱ miscarrying. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the word of E-li'sha which he spake.

^e Josh 4. 26; 1 Kings 16. 24.—^d Causing to miscarry.—
^f Exod. 15. 25; chap. 4. 41; & 8; John 9. 6.

^h Or, causeth her fruit.—ⁱ Or, causing of fruit.

III. PROPHETIC POWER. Verses 19-22.

19-22. And the men of the city—Leading citizens. They had learned that Elisha was now gifted with the spirit and power of Elijah. The situation of Jericho, near the passage of the Jordan, was such as to attract a considerable population after it was rebuilt, and for the sake of the prosperity which came to them in other ways they were content to dwell in such an unwholesome place. Now, however, they saw a hope of benefit, and with this thought they came to Elisha.—*Lumby*. It is good making use of a prophet while we have him.—*Bishop Hall*. The situation of this city is pleasant—Jericho was a part of that country which, in Gen. 13. 10, is compared to "the garden of the Lord."—*Bible Commentary*. The water is naught—This word is of frequent occurrence in the English of the sixteenth century in the sense of "bad." *Shakespeare* so uses it repeatedly. The ground barren—As a result. The water was such as caused their trees to shed fruit prematurely and unhealthfully affected their cattle, and probably themselves.—*Cambridge Bible*. Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein—The purity and freshness of the vessel were to typify the purification wrought upon the spring. Salt, too, is significant of preservation and purity. We are not, however, to think of this as the means whereby the healing was wrought, but only as an outward sign to point to the work which was supernaturally performed.—*Cambridge Bible*. The noxious qualities of the water could not be corrected by the infusion of salt—for supposing the salt was possessed of such a property, a whole spring could not be purified by a dishful for a day, much less in all future time. The pouring in of the salt was a symbolic act with which Elisha accompanied the word of the Lord, by which the spring was healed.—*Keil*. The spring exists "unto this day" (ver. 22); and is doubtless the spring now known as *Ain es Sultan*, the only spring in the neighborhood of Jericho. Its waters spread over the entire plain. A large spring of water, which has a sweet and pleasant taste.—*Bähr*. Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters—The prophet by his words carries the thought away from the sign to the thing signified, the power of God exerted at the prayer of the prophet. We cannot suppose, though no mention is made of it, that the healing was attempted without a calling upon God.—*Lumby*. This miracle was typical of the work done by the Lord after the ascension of Christ, by means of the apostles and their successors casting the salt of Christian doctrine from the new cruse of the Gospel into the unhealthful waters of the Jericho of this world, and healing them.—*Wordsworth*. Compare with this miracle that of the healing of the poisonous pottage (chap. 4. 38-41) and the waters of Marah. Exod. 15. 25.—*Terry*.

Godliness is profitable. Most boys need to learn this lesson. He who is nearest the prophet of the Lord is the man who has most privileges. Even in this life it pays to be on God's side.

All pleasures of this world are heavily discounted. Arm in arm with every advantage comes a great disadvantage. There is many a Jericho now, the beauty of whose surroundings is largely brought about by their miasmatic and malarial conditions. There are analogies to this in our daily social life.

All adequate and permanent reform must be begun at the springs of life. This is the reason you are teaching in the Sunday-school. It will not do to wait to make men good until they have become men. Make out a list of the effective members of your church, ladies and gentlemen, and ascertain the date of their conversion and you will find that nine out of ten of them sought the Lord before they were twenty years of age. Elisha was a philosopher as well as a prophet.

God keeps his word. Every "thus saith the Lord" has been or will be fulfilled. No divine promise to pay was ever broken.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

No sin to mourn in bereavement. Ver. 12.—A colored woman when reproved for undue expression of grief said: "Now, look here, honey, when de good Lord sends us tribulations, don't you s'pose he 'spects us to tribulate?"

In the *Marble Faun*, Hawthorne makes Miriam, the broken-hearted singer in the midnight song that went up from the Roman Coliseum, put into the melody the pent-up shriek her anguish had almost given vent to a moment before. That volume of melodious voice was one of the tokens of a great trouble. The thunderous anthem gave her opportunity to relieve her heart by a great cry.

In the Pitti Palace, Florence, two pictures hang together. One represents a stormy sea, and black clouds and fierce lightnings flashing across the sky. In the waters a human face is seen wearing an expression of the utmost agony and despair. In the other the sea seems as fierce and the clouds as dark, but out of the billows rises a rock. In a cleft of this are tufts of grass and sweet flowers, while a dove is sitting quietly on her nest. So does the sorrow of the world contrast with that of the Christian.

When a man looks through a tear in his own eye, that is a lens which opens reaches in the unknown, and reveals orbs no telescope could do.—*Beecher*.

God will take care of his cause. Ver. 13.—When Jabez Bunting, one of the greatest of Wesley's disciples, died, a minister preaching his funeral sermon closed a glowing peroration by saying, "When Dr. Bunting died, the sun of Methodism set." A plain man in the audience immediately shouted, "Glory be to God! that's a lie anyhow!"—*Taylor*.

Henry VIII. wrote a silly book against Luther, for which the pope gave him the title, "Defender of the Faith." His court jester, on noticing his joy at the acquisition, said, "My good Harry, let thee and me defend each other, and leave the faith alone to defend itself."

God buries his workman, but carries on his work.

Thrice blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field when he
Is most invisible.—*Faber*.

Confidence in one's mission. Ver. 14.—Correggio, on viewing the pictures of Raphael, exclaimed, "I too am a painter."

In driving piles a machine is used by which a huge weight is lifted up and then made to fall upon the head of the pile. The higher the weight is lifted the more powerful the blow it gives when it descends. The higher we rise in the consciousness of God-given authority the greater will be our courage and power.—*Spurgeon*.

Looking over the dead on the field of battle, it was easy to see why that young man fought so valiantly. Hidden under his vest was a sweet face done up in gold; and so, through love's heroism, he fought with double strokes. Our Master's mandate is such a talisman.

"I am sure," said William Pitt, after his dismissal from office, to the Duke of Devonshire, "I can save this country, and nobody else can." For eleven weeks England was without a ministry. At last the king and aristocracy recognized Pitt's ascendancy and yielded up to him the reins.—*Bancroft*.

When the Master of the universe has points to carry in his government, he impresses his will in the structure of some mind.—*Emerson*.

God is unchanging. Ver. 14.—There be many people like unto young sailors who think the shore and the whole land doth move when they ship and are themselves moved away. So men imagine God moveth because their giddy souls are under sail, subject to ebbing and flowing. —*Rutherford*.

The admirers of Charlemagne set up his poor corpse in its grave, crowned his pulseless temples, and put a scepter in his bloodless fingers. Grim mockery! But our King eternal lives on in unchanging supremacy.

When Raphael was executing the frescoes for which the Roman Papal government engaged him, he drew the figures, determined the subjects, and grouped them, working out his designs in pencil. He then put them into his scholars' hands and when they had done their best he gave the pictures finishing touches. Though many agents were employed at successive stages, his brain-power, supervision, and inspiring counsels were the chief motive forces all through. Whatever our place or work we have the same infinite resources at our command.

God is a sun that never sets. He is where he was and does not change in place or power.—*Spurgeon*.

Still restless nature dies and grows;
From change to change thy creatures run;
Thy being no succession knows,
And all thy vast designs are one.—*Watts*.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be.
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.—*Tennyson*.

Recognizing and following a new leader. Ver. 15.—When a piece of metal is coined with the king's stamp and made current by his edict, no man may presume either to refuse it in payment or abate the value of it. So God's Chosen is to be recognized and accepted.

When Douglas was carrying the heart of Bruce in a silver casket for interment at Jerusalem he joined the Spaniards in a battle against the Moors, and was soon surrounded by horsemen. In desperation he threw the casket before him, saying, "Pass first, as thou wert wont to do, and Douglas will follow thee or die."

Professor Tyndall took a tube, a resonant jar, and a flame. By raising his voice to a certain pitch he made the silent flame sing. The song was hushed. When the proper note was again sounded the flame responded. If the position varies there is a tremor, but no song. When the finger stopped the tube the flame was silent. Sonorous pulses at the extremity of the room commanded the fiery singer. Ability to sway hearts can only be secured by close study of the laws of influence.

The folly of doubt. Ver. 16-18.—A poor colored woman who worked hard, but was a joyous Christian, talked with a gloomy Christian lady. The latter said: "Ah, Nancy, it is all well to be happy now, but I should think thoughts of the future would sober you. Suppose, for instance, you should be sick and unable to work, or suppose your employers should move away, or suppose—" "Stop," cried Nancy; "I never suppose. De Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. And, honey, it's all your supposes as is makin' you so mis'able."

An empty vessel, capable of holding water, if tightly corked, none can enter it. Whether water is thrown on it or it is thrown into the sea it remains empty. So unbelief closes the heart to the good within reach.

We say "perhaps" a hundred times a day, but the word "perhaps" found no place in the vocabulary of the Saviour.—*Jones*.

Godliness is profitable. Vers. 19-22.—On a hot summer's day I was sailing in a tiny boat on a lake inclosed within a circle of Scottish hills. On the shoulder of the brown sunburnt mountain was a well with a crystal stream trickling over its lip and making its way toward the lake. Around the well's mouth, and along the course of the rivulet, a belt of green stood out in contrast with the iron surface of the rocks around. It showed how needful a good man is and how useful in a desert world.—*Arnot*.

When the probationers in the school of Pythagoras grew weary in trying to be helpful to others, and preferred to be idle, they were treated as dead. Obsequies were performed, and tombs were raised with inscriptions to warn others of their wretched end.

TEACHING HINTS.

As an introduction, the previous history of Elisha should be carefully studied, and its leading facts should be shown. Elisha received a preparation for the high office which thus suddenly devolved upon him. Note 1.) *His self-sacrificing choice*; leaving a wealthy home for the wandering and perilous life of a prophet. 1 Kings 19. 19-21. 2.) *His lowly service*. 2 Kings 3. 11. He did not disdain to take the part of a servant toward God's prophet. 3.) *His holy companionship*. For ten years he walked with Elijah and learned to partake of his spirit. 4.) *His aspiration*; as shown in the last lesson. It was his ideal to be in Israel what Elijah had been, the anointed prophet and leader of God's people.

In this lesson Elisha stands before us fully equipped and commissioned as the prophet of the Lord. We notice:

1. **His prophetic insight.** Ver. 12. He *saw*, when others only "stood to view." His was the insight of mighty faith, which sees the invisible. This insight is the mark of the Christian, who sees God when others fail to apprehend him; who sees Christ as his Saviour; who can see before him the path of duty; who can behold by faith the rewards of heaven.

2. **His prophetic power.** Vers. 13, 14. The magic was not in Elijah's mantle, which in the hands of a common man could not have accomplished such wonders. It was in Elisha's faith. He did not say, "Where is Elijah's mantle?" but "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Elisha believed God, and all things are possible to him that believeth.

3. **His prophetic authority.** Vers. 15-18. The sons of the prophets possessed a measure of the Spirit. They saw God's hand, though they did not see Elijah's ascension; they recognised his successor, though they did not fully comprehend, what Elisha saw clearly, that Elijah had been taken from earth. There is among men an instinctive desire for leaders. The man who has the divine stamp of kingliness will command, and other men will obey. The Church needs leaders, and God will always raise them up for the hour.

4. **His prophetic healing.** Vers. 19-22. Miracles were wrought for a threefold purpose. 1.) To call attention to the higher work of the prophet. Gifts of miracles are essentially lower than the power to win souls, although they strike the popular eye. 2.) To show the authority of a messenger from God. Men will believe the utterance of one who shows his power by signs from heaven. 3.) More especially, as symbols of spiritual working. The healing of the fountain of Jericho was a token of what God was about to do for the hearts of Israel.

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2. **TO SERMONS AND ADDRESSES.**—*Succession of Spiritual Life*, by A. P. STANLEY. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* E. D. GRIFFIN. *Elisha*, J. R. MACDUFF.

LESSON IX.—March 1.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.—2 Kings 4. 25-37.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them.—John 5. 21.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—How soon after Elisha's introduction into the prophetic office cannot be told. About B. C. 895.

PLACES.—The prophet's residence at Mt. Carmel, and the home of the Shunammite.

RULERS.—The monarchs of Judah and Israel were at this date each named Jehoram. The Israelitish king is sometimes called Joram.

CONNECTING LINKS.—After healing the impure spring at Jericho, by casting in salt, Elisha journeyed to Beth-el, to Mt. Carmel, and thence to Samaria. Near Beth-el "she-bears out of the wood" tare the scoffers who "mocked him." He foretold to Jehoram the destruction of the rebellious Moabites; miraculously multiplied the oil in the home of a widow of one of the sons of the prophets; and became the frequent guest of a "great woman" of Shunem.

Authorized Version.

25 So she went, and came unto the man of God 'to mount Car'mel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Ge-ha'zi his servant, Behold, *yonder is that Shu'nam-mite.*

26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?* And she answered, *It is well.*

Revised Version.

25 So she went, and came unto the man of God to mount Car'mel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Ge-ha'zi his servant, Behold, yonder

26 is the Shu'nam-mite: run, I pray thee, now to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is

¹ Chap. 2. 25.

I. THE MOTHER. Verses 25-28.

25, 26. To mount Carmel.—The distance would occupy five or six hours' riding. The whole narrative gives the impression that on Carmel there was a center of prophetic teaching and religious worship, and that the family from Shunem were among the frequenters thereof.—*Lumby.* The man of God saw her afar off, and is able to say to Gehazi who she is some time before she arrives.—*Cambridge Bible.* Run now—Elisha showed, by sending his servant to meet her and to salute her, how highly he esteemed this woman.—*Bähr.* Is it well?—There is a touch of deep feeling in the action of Elisha. He knows that there must be some special reason for a visit at this unusual time, and he would learn, even before the mother is near enough for him to hear her, whether there is trouble at home. And she answered, It is well.—The word means peace, and we can only think that she gives this answer to Gehazi's question that she may avoid more words. She has no thought of deception, but her heart is too full for speech, at all events till she come into the prophet's presence.—*Cambridge Bible.* Her answer was purposely brief and vague to Gehazi, for she reserved a full disclosure of her loss for the ear of the prophet himself. She had met Gehazi at the foot of the hill, and she stopped not in her ascent till she could disburden her heavy-laden spirit at Elisha's feet. The violent paroxysm of grief into which she fell on approaching him appeared to Gehazi an act of disrespect to his master: he was prepar-

Authorized Version.

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught ^ahim by the feet: but Ge-ha'zi ^bcame near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul ^cis ^dvexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.

28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

Revised Version.

27 well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. And Ge-ha'zi came near to thrust her away; but the man of God said, Let her alone: for her soul is ^evexed within her; and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I

^a By his feet.—^b Matt. 18. 22.—^c Bitter; 1 Sam. 1. 10.

^e Heb. bitter.

ing to remove her when the prophet's observant eye perceived that she was overwhelmed with some unknown cause of distress.—*Bible Commentary.*

Sympathy in trouble is a universal need. See ILLUSTRATIONS. For that reason God had given to every one a good original stock of sympathy and indefinite power of development. Jesus was the most sympathetic man who ever lived.

The only relief in trouble comes from God. And its quickest route is by way of God's servants. To go "unto a man of God" is a wise course, and our scholars should be made so confident of our sympathy that their pastor and teacher will be among the earliest in whom they would confide their troubles. The Romish confessional is a great abuse of what nevertheless is one of the most clamorous needs of the human heart.

True friendship bears our burdens. A child who falls hurts its mother more than it hurts itself, because of her love, and so far as friendship is genuine it runs out in haste to lift the troubles from the hearts of the beloved ones. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

A faith that shines more bright and clear when tempests rage without. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Is there in all literature a more wonderful illustration of the triumph of faith than this? The woman's child is dead. Her home is full of wailers. All her hopes are blasted, and yet she firmly says, "It is well." Not that she foresaw with certainty her child's resurrection, but that her faith in God and in his representative makes her sure of ultimate happiness. Read the close of Habakkuk's prayer: "Although the fig-tree," etc. Hab. 3. 17-19. May we not exercise equal faith in our daily lives?

27, 28. To the hill—Elisha had been standing on a height which enabled him to command a view of the road for some distance.—*Cambridge Bible.* She caught him by the feet—In the attitude of humblest supplication.—*Lumby.* Gehazi came near to thrust her away—The word in other places indicates a considerable degree of force.—*Cambridge Bible.* The Lord hath hid it from me—The prophets were not always illumined with the gift of foresight or of vision. They were not always "in the Spirit."—*Terry.* The idea that the prophet ordinarily would know of an impending calamity, and hasten to prevent it, is incorrect. We must rather compare places like 2 Sam. 7. 8, etc., which show the fallibility of the prophetic knowledge and judgment.—*Lange.* This whole scene is natural, and very graphic. If you ask after a person whom you know to be sick, the reply at first will invariably be, "Well, thank God," even when the very next sentence is to inform you that he is dying. Then the falling down, clasping the feet, etc., are actions witnessed every day. I have had this done to me often before I could prevent it. So, also, the officious zeal of the wicked Gehazi, who would thrust the broken-hearted mother away, probably thinking her touch pollution, agrees perfectly with what we know of the man and of the customs of the East.—*Thomson.* Did I desire a son—The words are almost reproachful, and make it clear to the prophet that the child is dead.—*Cambridge Bible.*

Sympathy is penetrative. A man learns to be sympathetic by practice. He sees troubles where other observers cannot. The bereaved mother might have come into Gehazi's presence without a suspicion on his part that any thing was wrong. The prophet suspected it when he saw her form in the distance, and knew it when she came into his presence. Let us cultivate earnestly this Christ-like talent of discerning the sorrows of our fellows which it may be in our power to relieve. **Good men should cultivate gentleness.** See ILLUSTRATIONS. It is the most perfect grace that can be attached to a noble character. It is not weakness, but abundance of power controlled. Many an opportunity for the highest usefulness is lost for want of this grace.

Authorized Version.

29 Then he said to Ge-ha'zi, 'Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, 'salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and 'lay my staff upon the face of the child.

80 And the mother of the child said, 'As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

81 And Ge-ha'zi passed on before

Revised Version.

29 not say, Do not deceive me! Then he said to Ge-ha'zi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

80 And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And

81 he arose, and followed her. And

²¹ 1 Kings 18, 46; chap. 9, 1.—²² Luke 10, 4.—²³ Exod. 17, 19; 14, 16; chap. 9, 8, 14; Acts 19, 12.—²⁴ Chap. 2, 2.

II. THE SERVANT. Verses 29-31.

29. Gird up thy loins—With the loose flowing garments of Orientals it is needful, when haste is desired, to gather them and bind them together so that they do not impede the traveler. This is done by a band round the waist.—*Cambridge Bible*. Take my staff—The staff of the prophet is not, of course, his traveling staff, but, like the staff (scepter) of a king, the badge of the prophetic gift which he had received from God; that is, of might and strength.—*Lange*. Lay . . . on the face of the child—The staff was probably an official rod of a certain form and size. Necromancers used to send their staff with orders to the messengers to let it come in contact with nothing by the way that might dissipate or destroy the virtue imparted to it. It is not easy to see the purpose of this order in the mouth of Elisha. It may be that he thought God would allow the restoration of the child by this means. Some have supposed that the action was meant to teach that the miracle was not to be ascribed to any external agency, but only to God's intervention in answer to prayer. Others have thought that the lack of faith in the mother, who would not go back without Elisha, caused the first measure adopted to be ineffective. Perhaps the prophet only sent on Gehazi that the mother might feel that something was being done, and be soothed in her distress.—*Fausset*. See notes by *Kitto* and *Terry* on verse 81. If thou meet any man, salute him not—An injunction necessary in the East where the salutations are full of form, and consume much time.—*Lumby*. You will have no time to linger, and a pausing to give or receive compliments may not only cause much waste of time, but so distract your thoughts as to frustrate the object of your mission.—*Terry*.

God's business ranks first. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Salutations and ceremonies are all right in their places, but the man who has an errand from God must not stop till his duty is performed. Remember Christ's injunctions to the twelve and the seventy. Directions of this sort never should be wrested into meaning that we are not to be courteous; but that of all the multifarious duties that come to us it is our first duty to do God's will.

Concentration of purpose is necessary to success. Those miracle-working prophets who seem at times to have played with the forces of nature almost as boys play with toys, nevertheless used their power strictly according to the dictates of common sense. You will find by making a list of the miracles how constantly shrewd and sensible were the prophets' methods. Elisha knew well that whatever power could be delegated by him to Gehazi would be dissipated long before he reached the Shunammite's cottage should he gossip by the way. Gossip and division of effort have stopped many a revival.

30. I will not leave thee—After the heartless attempt of Gehazi to thrust her away from the prophet's presence (ver. 27) she had no confidence in his ministry, even though he carry the staff of Elisha. Sacred vestments and a holy commission will not command the confidence of earnest souls, unless they be associated with a minister who himself gives evidence of a true and tender heart.—*Terry*. The prophet, it seems, had no design to accompany her; he intended to wait for Gehazi's return.—*Clarke*. She, not regarding the staff or the man, holds fast to Elisha. No hopes of his message can loose her fingers. She imagined that the servant, the staff, might be severed from Elisha; she knew that wherever the prophet was there was power.—*Bishop Hall*.

Authorized Version.

them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor *hearing*. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is *'not* awaked.

32 And when E-li'sha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed.

33 He *'went* in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and *'prayed* unto the LORD.

34 And he went up, and lay upon the

Revised Version.

Ge-ha'zi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor *'hearing*. Wherefore he returned to meet him, and told him, saying,

32 The child is not awaked. And when E-li'sha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead,

33 and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the

34 LORD. And he went up, and lay

c Attention.—John 11. 11.—Matt. 9. 6.—1 Kings 17. 20; Jas. 5. 16.

* Heb. *attention*.

31. **Neither voice, nor hearing**—He uttered no cry, he paid no heed. That is, he gave no signs of life. Elisha did not at first mean to go himself to Shunem, and for that reason sent his staff to supply the lack of his own presence. But after he had sent away the servant, his observation of the uneasiness of the mother, whom he had expected to have gone home satisfied, and her avowed determination not to leave him, induced him to alter his purpose and, with the kindness natural to him, to forego his own engagements at Carmel, and to accompany her to her forlorn home. It was probably in consequence of this change of plan that no response was made to the first claim of faith by means of the staff. This appeal was in fact superseded the moment he resolved to go in person, the Lord thus reserving for the personal intercession of his prophet the honor of this marvelous deed.—*Kittó*. But Gehazi's supposed unfitness to work the miracle, and the woman's lack of faith in him, are facts not to be overlooked. They may be a sufficient reason for the failure of Gehazi's mission. For, in the realm of the miraculous, divine power works not blindly nor arbitrarily but according to sacred laws. To affirm that there must be a sympathetic union or spontaneous affiliation between the human agencies employed and those deeply concerned in a given miracle is only to say what is abundantly suggested in the Scriptures. Nor is this to degrade a class of miracles to the low plane of animal magnetism, or explain them away on naturalistic principles; yet it need not be denied that the psychological basis of animal magnetism was a medium through which many miracles were performed, and without which some miracles could not have been wrought. When the disciples, after their failure to heal a lunatic child, asked Jesus why they could not work the miracle, he replied, "Because of your unbelief." Matt. 17. 20; comp. Matt. 18. 58; Mark 6. 56; 9. 23.—*Terry*. The child is not awaked—This does not mean that Gehazi thought the child was not dead. He knew this as well as the mother. But "sleep," even in the Old Testament, is used for "death." Comp. Job 14. 12; Psa. 13. 8; Jer. 51. 57. The common phrase on the death of a king is, "He slept with his fathers." See 1 Kings 1. 21.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Formal Christianity is ineffectual. Elisha's staff is a first-class instrument if it is in the hands of Elisha. In Gehazi's hand it is only a walking-cane worth a few pennies. So it is every-where. A few pebbles from the brook are invincible weapons of war if David flings them. The simple statement of Jesus's death is the means of the conversion of three thousand people when Peter makes it. And every-where that means are consecrated to God and used by consecrated men they will be effectual. But the forms of the Church in themselves have no more value than Elisha's staff.

III. THE CHILD. Verses 32-37.

32-35. **Upon his bed**—That is, Elisha's bed, in the chamber which was set apart for the prophet and in which the mother had left her child.—*Lumby*. **Prayed**—It is to be noted that the prayer precedes every other action. Without that all else will be of no avail. **And he went up**—The verb is used in 2 Kings 1. 4 of getting upon a bed. For some old beds it is very appropriate, for formerly they were much higher from the ground than is now the fashion. **And lay upon the child**—Comp. 1 Kings 17. 21. Probably Elisha knew of the acts of Elijah at Zarephath, and followed that example. The answer to his prayer seems to have been less immediate than in Elijah's case. Throughout the history there is a degree less of fervency in Elisha's

Authorized Version.

child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and ¹⁰he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned, and walked in the house ⁴to and fro; and went up, ¹¹and stretched himself upon him: and ¹²the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

Revised Version.

upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he ²stretched himself upon him; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house once to and fro; and went up, and ⁴stretched himself upon him; ⁵and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened

¹⁰ Acts 20. 10.—⁴Or, Once hither and once thither.—
¹¹ 1 Kings 17. 21.—¹² Chap. 6. 1.

² Or, bowed himself.—⁴ Or, bowed himself.—⁵ Or, and embraced the child.

actions, and hence, perhaps, the less quickly availing prayer.—*Cambridge Bible.* His mouth upon his mouth—This was designed to convey his own animal warmth to the dead child. He would thus use the natural means which God might make instrumental in working that which lay altogether beyond the power of Elisha. This placing of his mouth, eyes, and hands upon those of the child bore the same relation to this miracle which the spitte and the washing in Siloam did to the miracle by which Jesus gave sight to the man blind from his birth. John 9. 1-7. Divine power could have raised this child to life in answer to Elisha's prayer without any other action on the part of the prophet, but divine wisdom decreed otherwise. Christ opened one blind man's eyes by a single command; but in other cases he adopted peculiar measures to work substantially the same miracle. We cannot tell why, but we accept the facts, and argue from them the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Rom. 11. 33.—*Terry.* The flesh of the child waxed warm—The returning life is slowly given, but the first signs of restoration must have strengthened the zeal, and given fervor to the prayers, which no doubt filled every moment of the time of waiting and watching.—*Cambridge Bible.* The body of the prophet gave out its natural heat to the cold body of the child; the prophet no doubt continued in contact with the child till he could bear it no longer; then covered up the child, rose up, and walked smartly on the floor, till, by increasing the circulation of the blood by activity and strong and quick respiration, he could again afford to communicate another portion of his natural heat.—*Clarke.* Then he returned—That is, left the bed.—*Lumby.* His own animal heat might have become much reduced by absorption into the cold body of the child, and his walking to and fro was probably, as Bähr suggests, an involuntary result of the great emotion with which he looked and waited for the fulfillment of his prayer.—*Terry.* The exertion which he had used, and the emotion and anxiety he felt, would be overpowering. Hence the need for a change of posture. Elisha did not leave the chamber but walked from end to end of the room in which the child lay.—*Cambridge Bible.* Sneezed seven times—When the nervous influence began to act on the muscular system, before the circulation could be in every part restored, particular muscles, if not the whole body, would be thrown into strong contractions and shiverings, and sneezing would be a natural consequence; particularly as obstructions must have taken place in the head and its vessels, because of the disorder of which the child died.—*Clarke.*

God works by the use of means. Ver. 35. Though he needs none. The Almighty was not at all indebted to a staff of wood to divide the Red Sea or a piece of cloth to divide the Jordan. Jesus needed no clay to cure a blind man, nor five loaves and a few small fishes as a nucleus of his dinner party. But though he needs them not, God uses them, and we are not to look with contempt on any of those means which the Christian Church has been able to use in all ages for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Thank God for the ordained sacraments and for the unordained hymns and prayers and Christian literature! They have been of incalculable advantage to godly souls.

Prayer cannot dispense with labor. Ver. 34. If it could, the farmers might hold a prayer-meeting in their wheat-fields and then go off on a summer excursion. Every body would denounce such conduct, and yet some people, who have both godliness and brains, seem to think that what would be absurd with food is sensible with medicine, and that we are to pray for sick people and then throw all the responsibility of their recovery on God. But here was a prophet with miraculous power who sedulously obeys the hygienic laws as he understands them, and treats this dead boy almost as if he had been a drowned boy, to be restored by natural means. There is no authority in the word of God for dispensing with any worthy means, spiritual or secular.

Authorized Version.

Revised Version.

36 And he called Ge-ha'zi, and said, Call this Shu'nam-mite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

36 his eyes. And he called Ge-ha'zi, and said, Call this Shu'nam-mite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up

37 thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground; and she took up her son, and went out.

²² Heb. 11. 25.

The secret of success is self-sacrifice. Ver. 34. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Elisha worked for the recovery of this child with a self-abnegation the effects of which he probably felt for weeks afterward. He had but one thing to do, and he did it by the employment of all his powers. That is the way success has been achieved in every struggle. Make out a list of the hundred greatest men of history, and if your list is correct you have the names of the hundred hardest workers that ever lived.

36, 37. What suspense must the Shunammite have felt while the prophet was employed in the slow process referred to above! for slow in its nature it must have been, and exceedingly exhausting to the prophet himself.—*Clarke*. As might be expected, there have not been wanting rationalistic interpreters who have explained this miracle as a case of suspended animation, or fit of apoplexy, and Elisha's efforts as the manipulations of animal magnetism by which sensation was restored. Of course, such expositors ignore or deny the plain statement that the child was dead, and so do not explain, but contradict and torture, the word of Scripture.—*Terry*.

How true an heir is Elisha of his master, not in his graces only but in his actions. Both of them divided the waters of Jordan, the one as his last act, the other as his first. Elijah's curse was the death of the captains and their troops; Elisha's curse was the death of the children; Elijah rebuked Ahab to his face; Elisha, Jehoram; Elijah supplied the drought of Israel by rain from heaven; Elisha supplied the drought of the three kings by waters gushing out of the earth; Elijah increased the oil of the Sareptan; Elisha increased the oil of the prophet's widow; Elijah raised from death the Sareptan's son; Elisha the Shunammite's; both of them had one mantle, one spirit; both of them climbed up one Carmel, one heaven.—*Bishop Hall*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

The need of sympathy in trouble. Ver. 25.—A clergyman sat in his study busily engaged, when his little boy toddled in, holding up a pinched finger, and moaning, "Look, papa, how I hurt it!" The father glanced at it and with slight impatience said, "I can't help it, sonny." The little fellow's eyes grew bigger, and as he left he said, "Yes, you could; *you might have said 'O'!*"

In certain climates the gales that spring from the land carry a refreshing odor out to sea, and assure the anxious pilot that he is approaching a desirable coast, when as yet he cannot discern it with his eyes. Emblem of the attraction a sympathetic heart exerts over the sorrowing.—*Townson*.

In the human body there is a complex nerve called the *great sympathetic*, which does not exist to register sensations but to connect and harmonize the various functions of divers organs. What this is to the body, sympathy is to society.

The Christ-like character is like the *Æolian harp*, which gives music, bright or sad, according to the breeze which touches it; or like a lake which mirrors tree and rock, dark cloud and heaven's unchanging blue.—*Dr. F. Cook*. Christians should "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Christian graces should be like Croton water, which presses from the reservoir in every faucet in the city. Each one should be ready for use when needed, whereas they are often like a pump run down.—*Becher*.

Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
A master, or a servant, or a friend,
Bids each on other for assistance call.—*Pope*.

Friendship has a power
To soothe affliction in her darkest hour.—*H. K. White.*

A true friend seeks to bear our burdens. Ver. 26.—It was once a problem in mechanics to find a pendulum which would be equally long in all weathers. But the problem is solved. By a process of compensation the rod lengthens as much one way as it contracts the other, so that the pendulum swings the same number of beats in a day in January as in a day in June. The index maintains uniformity whether heat lengthens or cold shortens the regulating power. Our principles can be so fixed that the outflow of kindly aid will be reliable.

Love is ownership! We own whom we love. The universe is God's because he loves.—*Beecher.*

An engineer in the South-west saw a train coming with which he must collide. Faithful to the welfare of his passengers he slowed up the train till the last moment. He said to the fireman, "Jump! one man is enough here." The fireman was saved, while the engineer died at his post.—*Talmage.*

A very poor and aged man, while planting an apple-tree, was asked: "Why do you plant who cannot hope to eat the fruit!" He replied, "Some one planted trees before I was born and I have eaten the fruit. I plant now, that the memorial of my gratitude may exist when I am gone."

Oberlin was traveling from Strasburg. Snow rendered the roads impassable. When half-way he sank down exhausted and fell into, as he believed, the sleep of death. But a wagon-driver passed, took him into his wagon, and by wine, food, and effort revived the dying man. He refused to accept reward, and would not even give his name till Oberlin would tell him the name of the good Samaritan.

So if I live or die to serve my friend,
'Tis for my love, 'tis for my friend alone,
And not for any rate that friendship bears
In heaven or earth.—*George Elliot.*

A friend should bear his friend's infirmities.—*Shakespeare.*

He ought not to pretend to friendship's name
Who reckons not himself and friend the same.—*Tuke.*

Faith triumphing over appearances. Ver. 26. In the English channel are three tiers of rocks known as the Eddystone rocks. In 1696 Winstanley built a light-house there and challenged old ocean to damage the structure. Builder and work went down in a gale soon after. "Still," said England's mechanics, "it can be done." In 1709 another was built. This too was swept away, by fire. "Still," said John Smeaton, "it can be done." In 1759 he built the structure which braved every storm until, in 1882, other reasons led to its removal.

At the close of the civil war Cumberland University, Tennessee, was left in ruins. The endowment was gone. A former student walked around the ruins and wept. Then he walked up to a column and wrote the word "*Resurgam.*" The word was caught up as a text for thrilling speeches. Without a dollar in hand a full corps of professors was appointed, with salaries guaranteed, and free tuition and board pledged to candidates for the ministry. All who came were cared for, and no debts contracted.

The world thinks such vision strange, if not fanatical—as in the case of the man whose sight was so extraordinary he could see the fleet enter the harbor of Carthage while he stood in Sicily. A man feasting his eyes on objects across an ocean! So faith brings the future near and sees good in seeming ill.—*Bonar.*

See the spider cast out her flim to the gale, confident that it will adhere somewhere and form the commencement of the web. We are to believe on and toil on in the assurance of triumph.—*Spurgeon.*

Where reason fails, with all her powers,
There faith prevails and love adores.—*Wesley.*

Good men should cultivate gentleness and sympathy. Ver. 27.—At the Synod of Moscow, held A. D. 585, bishops were forbidden to keep dogs or hawks, lest the poor should be injured instead of being fed. So should Christians banish moroseness and angry temper lest burdened souls be discouraged in approaching them.

John Newton on the wall of his study at Olney, just over his desk, had these words in very large letters: "Remember thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." They reveal one secret of his marvelous influence.

It is said that Trajan, the Roman emperor, tore his robe to bind up the wounds of a bleeding soldier.

The Persians have a proverb that when the orphans cry the throne of Deity rocks.

Dr. Hamilton compares gentleness to the scented flame of an alabaster lamp yielding light and fragrance; to a soft carpet which deadens creaking noise; to a curtain which wards off winter's wind and summer's glow; and to a pillow where sickness forgets sorrow.

One Sunday with my Aunt Esther did me more good than forty in church with my father. He thundered over my head; she instructed me down in my heart. The promise that she would read Joseph's history drew a silver thread of obedience through the entire week.—*Beescher*.

That best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.—*Wordsworth*.

What thou wilt
Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile
Than hew to't with thy sword.—*Shakespeare*.

God's business ought to be first. Ver. 29.—While Archbishop Usher was preaching in the church at Covent Garden a message arrived that the king wished to see him immediately. He descended from the pulpit, listened to the command, and told the messenger "that he was then employed in God's business, but when done would wait upon the king to know his pleasure," and then continued his sermon.

It is said of Sister Dora that, no matter at what hour the hospital door-bell rang, she used to rise instantly to admit the patient, saying to herself, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

Fowell Buxton attributed his great success in life to his being a whole man to one thing at a time. "This one thing I do."

Professor Joseph Henry, of Washington, a great Christian scientist, said: "I have no faith in universal geniuses; I train all my guns on one point until I make a breach."

A man, says Emerson, is like a bit of Labrador spar; which has no luster as you turn it till you come to a certain angle, then it shows deep and beautiful colors.

After an appeal from a missionary in the West Indies for help to spread the Gospel, a negro came forward, handed one parcel, saying, "That's for me, massa!" then a second, saying, "That's for my wife, massa;" and still another, amounting to twelve dollars, "That's for my child." When asked if he were not giving too much, he said, "God's work must be done, and I may be dead."

Act, act in the living present!
Heart within and God o'erhead!—*Longfellow*.

God works by the use of means. Vers. 29, 31.—He gives us fruitful soil, changing season, dew, rain, and sunshine, but we must plow and sow and use our skill if we are to reap a harvest; he gives us wind and tide, but we must spread our sail and steer our course if we are to reach our desired haven.—*W. A. D.*

"God helps those that help themselves."

A squall caught a party crossing a lake in Scotland and threatened to capsize their boat. In the crisis, the largest and strongest man in the party was in great alarm, and said, "Let us pray." "No, no," shouted the old boatman, "let the little man pray; you take an oar."

One pupil at boarding-school was remarked for always having her lessons well. A stupid companion asked how she succeeded in this, and was told it was owing to her praying about the matter daily. "Well, then," she said, "I will pray too!" But next morning she could not repeat her lesson. She reproached her friend as being deceitful. "Perhaps," rejoined the latter, "when you prayed you took no pains to learn the lesson." "I did not learn it at all," she responded; "I thought I had no need to learn when I prayed."

One of the Roman warriors attributed his victory to the fact that the gods favored him because he begged for success with his drawn sword in his hand, and fought while he cried to heaven for help.

Thine to work as well as pray,
Clearing thorny wrongs away:
Plucking up the weeds of sin,
Letting heaven's warm sunshine in.—*Whittier*.

Self-sacrifice is often the secret of success. Ver. 34.—Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon form a triad of illustrious French preachers, of whom the latter is best known. In 1717 he preached the "Petit Carême," a course of ten lectures addressed to the king, then nine years old. These lectures were idyllic pictures of the duties of good kings. When Massillon was, a year afterward, received into the Academy, the Abbe Fleury complimented him on having accommodated his teaching to the youth of the king, after the manner of Elisha, who contracted himself to the measure of the child, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands.

It is told of Ponsa, the Chinese potter, that he tried long to make some great work for the emperor, but in vain. At length in despair he threw himself into the furnace, and the effect of his self-immolation on the ware was that it came out the most beautiful piece of porcelain ever known.—*W. M. Taylor*.

A clergyman told an affecting incident to Mr. Whitefield, but in a cold, conversational way. Soon after he heard Mr. Whitefield preach and use this same illustration with such effect that he found himself weeping like a child. The great preacher, with all the thunder of his voice, made his gestures and words seem part of the soul; he literally *threw his soul into them*.—*Cheever*.

Garibaldi sent out this proclamation: "Men of Italy, I offer you cold, hunger, rage, and death. Whoever loves his country, let him follow me." And they came from every direction, real warriors, not holiday soldiers.

TEACHING HINTS.

In the preparation of this lesson the entire chapter should be read, and from the eighth verse it should be carefully studied. Several lines of thought may be found in this lesson.

1. We may present it as a study in character. The Shunammite mother shows some noble traits. 1.) As a woman of high social position, evidently the leading spirit in the household, and full of earthly cares, she maintained a deep interest in spiritual things. 2.) She was an attendant upon the public means of grace, going regularly to worship. Ver. 23. 3.) She was generous toward God's cause and helpful to God's workers. 4.) She was quick to appreciate the influence of religion in her family. Ver. 9. How clearly she saw the character of Elisha. 5.) She was humble though rich; not ambitious of place, but contented with her sphere. Ver. 18. 6.) Her most marked trait was her faith, believing that God through his prophet could bring back her child from the dead. Such a character as this could be made a most interesting lesson.

2. We may take one trait of this woman, and show her as an example of faith. 1.) Faith tried—the touching story of the child's death. Remember, that this was the child which had been given to her as a reward for her service of God to his prophet. 2.) Faith working—she did not sit down in sorrow, but showed her faith by her conduct. Every act, and even the things which she did not do (for example, her concealment of the death from her husband), showed her faith. 3.) Faith rewarded—show how abundant was her recompense, and how great her gratitude, when she received her living son into her arms.

3. We may take the miracle as a symbol of the divine working. 1.) Note the parental solicitude. We should be as anxious for the salvation of our children as for their lives. 2.) The persistent faith, "I will not leave thee!" Here is the spirit of a true seeker after God. 3.) The powerless ceremony. Probably Elisha sent Gehazi as his representative, with the staff as the sign of his authority. If the servant's faith had been that of his master, *he* could have wrought the miracle. Gehazi throughout the history shows the failure of a formal, self-seeking, cold heart. 4.) The successful prayer. Take Elisha in the chamber with the dead child as an example of prayer, earnest, persevering, answered. 5.) In the restoration of the child's life see at once a picture of the salvation of a soul from death unto life, and a foretaste of the coming resurrection.

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2. TO SERMONS AND ADDRESSES.—*Death in Early Life*, EMMONS. *The Shunammite*, W. JAY. *Religious Influence of Mothers*, DR. MATTHEWS. *Submission to Providence in the Death of Children*, P. DODDRIDGE, iv, 25. *All the Dispensations of Providence are Good*, C. SIMON. *Grace of Christian Courtesy*, BISHOP WORDSWORTH.

LESSON X.—March 8.

NAAMAN HEALED.—2 KINGS 5. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.
PSA. 103. 3.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—Not long after the last lesson; perhaps B. C. 884.

PLACES.—1. Damascus, capital of the kingdom of Syria. 2. Samaria, capital of the kingdom of Israel. 3. The Jordan. 4. The Abana, the main stream by which the plain of Damascus is fertilized; it bears now the name Barada. It rises in the high plain south of Zebodany, on Anti-Lebanon, where I afterward visited its fountains, and rushes in a south-easterly course down the mountain till it issues upon the plain. Here it turns eastward, and, flowing along the north wall of the city, takes its way across the plain to the northern lakes. It is a deep, broad, rushing mountain stream; and although not less than nine or ten branches are taken from it for the supply of the city and the plain, yet it still flows on as a large stream, and enters the middle lake by two channels. The water is

limpid and beautiful.—*Robinson*. 5. The Pharpar, the modern *Awaj*, that flows some distance south of Damascus. Its source, course, and the lake into which it empties were first explored by J. L. Porter in the year 1852.—*Terry*. It has two principal sources, one high up on the eastern side of Hermon, just beneath the central peak; the other in a wild glen a few miles southward. The streams unite near Sasa, and the river flows eastward in a deep rocky channel, and falls into a lake about four miles south of the lake into which the Barada falls. Although the Awaj is eight miles distant from the city, yet it flows across the whole plain of Damascus; and large ancient canals drawn from it irrigate the fields and gardens almost up to the walls. The total length of the Awaj is nearly forty miles, and in volume it is about one-fourth that of the Barada. The Barada and the Awaj are the only rivers of any importance in the district of Damascus, and there can be little doubt that the former is the Abana, and the latter the Pharpar.

—*Porter*.

PERSONS.—1. The King of Syria, probably Ben-hadad. 2. The King of Israel, probably Jehoram. 3. Naaman, a Syrian noble. See article on NAAMAN'S CONVERSION, page 123. 4. A captive maid. 5. Naaman's servants. 6. Elisha.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Between the last lesson and this two miracles are reported. During a "dearth" in Gilgal Elisha by divine power prevented the evil effects of poisonous greens accidentally gathered for food. By the same power he fed one hundred men with a meager portion of barley loaves and ears of corn.

Authorized Version.

1 Now ¹Na'a-man, captain of the host of the king of Syr'i-a, was a ²great man ³with his master, and ⁴honorable, because by him the LORD had given ⁵deliverance unto Syr'i-a: he was also a mighty man in valor; *but he was a leper.*

2 And the Syr'i-ans had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Is'ra-el a little maid; and she ⁶waited on Na'a-man's wife.

Revised Version.

1 Now Na'a-man, captain of the host of the king of Syr'i-a, was a great man ¹with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given ²victory unto Syr'i-a: he was also a mighty man of valor, *but he was a* 2 leper. And the Syr'i-ans had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Is'ra-el a little maid; and she ³waited on Na'a-

¹ 1 Kings 8. 41, 48, 49; Luke 4. 37. — ² Exod. 11. 2. — ³ Before.
⁴ Lifted up, or, accepted in countenance, or, gracious. — ⁵ Or, victory. — ⁶ Was before.

¹ Heb. *before*. — ² Heb. *victory*. — ³ Heb. *was before*.

I. THE CAPTIVE MAID. Verses 1-4.

1. **Naaman**—According to some of the rabbis, the man who drew the bow and unintentionally killed Ahab, the king of Israel. 1 Kings 22. 34. Josephus, in giving account of Ahab's death, makes the same statement, but makes no mention of Naaman's leprosy, or its cure by Elisha. — **Terry.** **Captain of the host**—Commander-in-chief. **King of Syria**—See Introductory Note, Persons. **Great man with his master**—Official eminence in the East is largely due to royal favor. Mere worth or popularity could never of themselves secure it. But Naaman was "every inch a soldier," and seems to have merited honors by valor. **And honorable**—Rather, *very rich*. — **Bible Commentary.** The Lord had given deliverance unto Syria—By some great exploit Naaman had won a memorable victory. But that Jehovah was the real deliverer is the thought of the Jewish writer. The Syrians would have put the case differently. Note that Jehovah was not regarded by the writer of "Kings" as exclusively the God of the Jews, nor were the Gentiles thought to be beyond his care. He helps them though they know him not. — **Lumby and Terry.** **A leper**—The laws of the Jews concerning the separation of lepers from the rest of the people are given in Lev. 13 and 14, and are extremely stringent. Clearly in Syria there were no such regulations, for Naaman goes with the host to war, returns and lives at home with his wife and the household, and attends on the king when he goes to worship in the house of Rimmon. — **Bähr.** The disease with which Naaman was afflicted must have been of a less malignant character than leprosy generally is, otherwise he would have been physically incapable of soldierly duties. — **Cambridge Bible.**

Leprosy is a significant type of sin and spiritual impurity. How many there are of great worldly honor and power, who have all of earth that heart need wish, but in spirit are lepers! — **Terry.**

God moves in a mysterious way. He visited this great military chief, whom he had so magnified in other respects, with a disease which should make him humble, and teach him to seek further grace. That which seems to us and to all the world to be the greatest misfortune, and which is mourned as such, is often, according to God's wise counsel, the way to our highest good-fortune and welfare. — **Cahoon Bible.**

Rank, might, and wealth, are the things in which a man trusts who has not yet learned to trust God; but the Scripture says: "Put not your trust in riches." Psa. 146. 3, 5; 118. 9. "A horse is a vain thing for strength." Psa. 33. 17; "We brought nothing into this world." 1 Tim. 6. 7.

Great eminence allied with sad defect. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Wherever there is great fortune there is also a discordant "but," which, like a false note in a melody, mars its perfection. A worm gnaws at the root of every pleasure, and all life below carries about with it the germs of its death. — **Menken.** Every man has some BUT in his character; something that blemishes and diminishes him; some alloy to his grandeur; some damp to his joy. He may be very happy, very good, yet, in something or other, not so good as he should be, nor so happy as he would be. Naaman was as great as the world could make him, but the basest slave in Syria would not change skins with him. — **Matthew Henry.**

2, 3, 4. **By companies**—Marauding parties that roved along the Israelitish borders in quest of plunder. — **Terry.** **A little maid**—The world has journeyed a long distance from that wild day of guerrilla warfare and slave-hunting to this day of "Christian commissions" and arbitrations; and the journey is not yet complete. When the fullness of the Gospel of peace has come war will be no more. **Waited on Naaman's wife**—Some superiority must have been observed

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord <i>were</i> *with the prophet that <i>is</i> in Sa-ma'ri-a! for he would 'recover him of his leprosy.	3 man's wife. And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were 'with the prophet that is in Sa-ma'ri-a! then would he recover him
4 And <i>one</i> went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that <i>is</i> of the land of Is'ra-el.	4 of his leprosy. And *one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land
5 And the king of Syr'i-a said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Is'ra-el. And he departed, and 'took *with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand <i>pieces</i> of gold, and ten changes of raiment.	5 of Is'ra-el. And the king of Syr'i-a said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Is'ra-el. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand 'pieces of gold, and ten changes of
6 And he brought the letter to the	6 raiment. And he brought the letter
* Before. —† Gather in. —‡ 1 Sam. 9. 8; chap. 5. 8, 9. —§ In his hand.	* Heb. <i>before</i> . —§ Or, <i>he</i> . —¶ Or, <i>shekels</i> .

in this little maid, or she would not have been selected as an attendant in the home of so great a man as Naaman. **Would God**—The captive pities her proud mistress. **Recover him of his leprosy**—Literally, *he would gather him from his leprosy*. The expression is an allusion to the Israelitish custom of shutting lepers out of the camp, and gathering them in again after their leprosy was healed.—*Terry*. And told his lord, that is Naaman's lord, the king of Syria.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Providence chooses the right place for us. Ver. 2. See ILLUSTRATIONS. God has placed us where we are because it is the best place for the development of our character. If we could at all times fully believe this truth—which is plainly taught in the Bible—there would be fewer quarrels and misunderstandings in Church, home, and social life. It is not accident that has made you poor, or deprived you of high social and educational privileges, or surrounded you with "queer" people. Take your environments, whatever they may be, as one of the "talents" intrusted to you by God, and make the most of them.

It pays to teach children about God and his servants. Parents should early make their children acquainted with the living God and his holy word. Not every Sunday-school scholar, suddenly deprived of the advantages of Church and home, as was this Jewish maid, would have done as much for the Lord's cause.

How great things the little maid brought about without knowing it. God often makes use of the most insignificant instruments (1 Cor. 1. 28) for building up his kingdom and spreading abroad his name. The least important person in the household becomes a living proof of the all-controlling, loving care and providence of God, and of the declaration, Isa. 55. 9.—*Menken*.

The importance of redeeming opportunities. Ver. 3. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

II. THE ROYAL LETTER. Verses 5-8.

5, 6. **Go to, go**—Naaman was so valued by the king that not a moment must be lost, but he must start to seek for his cure at once.—*Cambridge Bible*. **I will send a letter**—There must have existed at this time such relations between Israel and Syria as made correspondence between the two kings possible. The two nations were at peace, as we see from verse 7, where Jehoram expresses his dread of a quarrel. The tone of the king of Israel seems to be that of one who feared Syria, and for that reason wanted to avoid a rupture.—*Lumby*. **The king of Israel**—Probably Jehoram, Ahab's son. **Took with him**—Very costly presents are indispensable as an introduction in the East.—*Bible Commentary*. **Ten talents of silver**—About seventeen thousand dollars. At this early date there was no coined money. The silver and the gold were in bars and were paid away by weight. **Six thousand pieces of gold**—About thirty-four thousand dollars.—*Terry*. Probably "shekels" might be read here instead of pieces; there were shekels of gold, silver (1 Sam. 9. 8), brass (1 Sam. 17. 5), and iron (1 Sam. 17. 7). When the shekel came to be a coin the shekel of gold was worth about ten dollars.—*Cambridge Bible*. **Ten changes of raiment**—Especially valued in the East, and often included in summaries of wealth. Comp. Gen. 14. 23; 2 Chron. 9. 24.—*Lumby*. Splendid dresses for festive occasions, of which the Orientals are very fond, the honor being thought to consist not only in their beauty and fineness,

Authorized Version.

king of Is'ra-el, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Na'a-man my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Is'ra-el had read the letter, that he 'rent his clothes, and said, Am I 'God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 And it was so, when E-li'sha the man of God had heard that the king of

Revised Version.

to the king of Is'ra-el, saying, And now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Na'a-man my servant to thee, that thou mayest

7 recover him of his leprosy. And it came to pass, when the king of Is'ra-el had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? but consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh 'a quarrel against me. And it was so, when E-li'sha the man of God heard that

^a Gen. 37. 29.—^b Gen. 30. 2; 1 Sam. 2. 6; Deut. 32. 36.

^c Or, an occasion.

but in having a variety to put on, one after another, in the same night.—*Bible Commentary*. These presents were all exceedingly valuable, and show the power and riches of Naaman, and his willingness to go to any pains and expense in order to be healed.—*Terry*. Now when this letter—This is not the commencement of the letter. The writer only extracts from it the sentence which contains the request. The insertion of the copula "and" by the Revised Version shows this, and represents the Hebrew more exactly.—*Cambridge Bible*. The letter was simply a note of introduction, as is the custom in the East, where the ambassador is usually intrusted with an oral as well as a written message.—*Bähr*. That thou mayest recover him of his leprosy does not imply that the king of Israel was in a relation of dependence to the Syrian king. The king probably thought of the prophet, of whom he had heard such great things, as the chief of a sort of magi, or as the Israelitish high-priest, who could probably be induced to undertake, on behalf of a foreigner, those ceremonies and functions of his office from which so great results were to be expected only by the intercession of the king.—*Menken*.

How men cling to life. Ver. 5. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

The power of spiritual ignorance. Ver. 6. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

7, 8. He rent his clothes—According to an ancient practice among the Eastern people the main object only was stated in the letter that was carried by the party concerned, while other circumstances were left to be explained at the interview. This explains Jehoram's burst of emotion—not horror at supposed blasphemy, but alarm and suspicion that this was merely made an occasion for a quarrel. Such a prince as he was would not readily think of Elisha.—*Bible Commentary*. Sometimes the act was a sign of grief, as in 2 Kings 2. 12 and in Gen. 37. 29; sometimes as here, it was indicative, of horror and alarm. Comp. also 2 Kings 18. 37; Ezra 9. 3; Jer. 38. 24.—*Cambridge Bible*. To kill and to make alive—The disease of leprosy was incurable, and so the request that it should be cured was such as the Author of life alone could grant. Comp. for the language Deut. 32. 39, "I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive." So also in Hannah's song. 1 Sam. 2. 6.—*Lumby*. Leprosy was regarded as the equivalent of death (Numb. 12. 12); to deliver from it was to make alive. The unreason of the demand made it seem clear that the Syrian king was only seeking a quarrel.—*Lange*. It is not probable that the king spoke the words, Wherefore consider, in the solemn audience in which the letter was delivered to him: he uttered this suspicion rather in the circle of his intimate attendants.—*Bähr*. Seeketh a quarrel—Jehoram fails to see the hand of God in all this; his worldly spirit discerns only a stratagem to break the peace between the two nations. He imagines Ben-hadad will ask an impossible thing of him, and then, because he cannot work a miracle for him, will war against him. His obtuseness is equal to Ben-hadad's ignorance.—*Terry*. It is only the one who feels his superiority that ventures on seeking a quarrel, and from the timid words of Jehoram we may conclude that he thought the Syrians more than a match for him; as was only natural, since they had defeated his father at Ramoth-gilead not long before. He dreaded a renewal

Authorized Version.

Is'ra-el had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and 'he shall know that there is a prophet in Is'ra-el.

9 So Na'a-man came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of E-li'sha.

10 And E-li'sha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and 'wash in Jor'dan seven times, and thy flesh shall

Revised Version.

the king of Is'ra-el had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet

9 in Is'ra-el. So Na'a-man came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of

10 E-li'sha. And E-li'sha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jor'dan seven times, and thy flesh

⁶ Exod. 4. 30. — ⁷ Chap. 4. 41; John 9. 7.

of such a conflict.—*Lumby*. Rent his clothes—If the arrival of the celebrated Syrian with his retinue caused a sensation in Samaria still more must the fact that the king had rent his clothes; the news of it flew to the prophet, who was then in the capital. Ver. 8.—*Lange*. He sent to the king—The prophets of Jehovah were now in no such peril as they had been in Ahab's days. Elisha has his house in the royal city, and has no fear of sending a messenger to the palace.—*Cambridge Bible*. Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes—Why yield to such frenzy of emotion and alarm? Hast thou forgotten the miracle in the wilderness of Edom (see chap. 3. 18, 18), and wilt thou still be stubbornly ignorant that there is a prophet in Israel through whom God works?—*Terry*. The king, in his fright, either did not think of Elisha, or he did not believe at all that there was any one who could help in such a case. Elisha therefore sends to him to remind him that there is a prophet in Israel. The God of Israel, in spite of the apostasy of king and people, yet makes himself known, in saving might, through his servants the prophets.—*Bähr*.

Conscience makes cowards of bad men. The king is terrified because he has a bad conscience. Job 15. 21; Wisdom 17. 11. Such a man always finds more in a letter than it says. Those who do not trust God do not trust one another. In his terror he is at a loss what to do. The king of Israel does not know what the little maid knew.—*Lange*.

Only God is really powerful. Great men, who are accustomed to find every one ready to do their will, often believe, in their blindness, that they can command that to be done which only God can do.—*Bähr*.

Wicked men ignore God. Carnal hearts, when need drives them, can think of God and his prophet; when their turn is served, can as utterly forget them as if they were not.—*Bishop Hall*.

Zeal for God. Ver. 7. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. THE ANGRY LEPER. Verses 9-13.

9, 10. Naaman came—Doubtless with a great retinue. The display would seem such as would draw even a prophet forth to behold.—*Lumby*. The house of Elisha, before the door of which Naaman stood (ver. 9), was certainly not a palace. So that the "great man" did not go in, but waited for the prophet to come out to him, and received him in a manner befitting his rank.—*Bähr*. Sent a messenger—He would not respect Naaman's pride enough to do him the honor of going out to him in person. It was his purpose to humble the proud spirit of the Syrian soldier.—*Terry*. He wanted to show to Naaman once for all that this princely magnificence, this splendor of earthly honor and wealth, did not affect him at all, and that there was not the least cause in all this why Naaman should be helped. He wished to prevent this foreigner from thinking that the help came from the prophet, and that he had the healing power in himself, and also to prevent him or any other from ascribing the cure to the application of any external means; for the Syrians knew as well as the Israelites that the Jordan could not heal leprosy. Naaman was to understand that he was healed by the grace and power of Almighty God, at the prayer of the prophet.—*Menken*. Wash in Jordan—This command was another measure designed to humble Naaman even more than the neglect of the prophet to come out of his house to see him.—*Terry*. Seven times—Since the seven days of God's first week, the number "seven" has been held somewhat more sacred than other numbers. Hence its frequent mention in religious services and ceremonial. Compare also its occurrence in the narrative of the deluge; in the appointment

Authorized Version.

come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Na'a-man was ^awroth, and went away, and said, Behold, ^bI thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and ^cstrike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 *Are* not ^dAb'a-na and Phar'par, rivers of Da-mas'cus, better than all the waters of Is-ra-el? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and ^ewent away in a rage.

Revised Version.

shall come again to thee, and ^athou

11 shalt be clean. But Na'a-man was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 12 *Are* not ^bAb'an-a and Phar'par, the rivers of Da'mas-cus, better than all the waters of Is-ra-el? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a

^a 1 Cor. 9. 14.—^b I said, or, I said with myself, He will surely come out, etc.—^c Move up and down.—^d Or, Amman.—^e Prov. 14. 17; 16. 32; 19. 11; Eccl. 7. 9; 11. 10; Eph. 4. 31; Col. 3. 8; Jas. 1. 19.

^a Heb. be thou clean.—^b Another reading is, Amman.

of the passover; in the observances connected with the cleansing of lepers, which may account for the use of the number in the present narrative. It was the number of the priests who blew with trumpets before the ark as the people entered the holy land, and for seven days they were to compass Jericho, and on the seventh day to do so seven times. These are but a few out of the instances in which the number is similarly used.—*Cambridge Bible*. **Thy flesh shall come again to thee**—In leprosy raw flesh appears and running sores are formed, so that the diseased person dies at last of emaciation and dropsy. The cure, therefore, consists in the restoration of flesh.—*Bähr*.

Horses and chariots, external grandeur and display, must often be employed to conceal internal misery from the eyes of the world and to impose upon it. A genuine man of God does not, however, allow himself to be deceived, or to be bribed by pomp and display, but he speaks out whatever God commands, whether it pleases the world or not.

Externals no index to true greatness. Ver. 9. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

The very simplicity of the Gospel is a stumbling-block to the proud.

Hard for pride to come down. Ver. 10. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

11, 12. But Naaman was wroth—He was not wont to be treated with indifference like this. I thought—He had pictured in his own mind a reception worthy of a king. He was exalted in his own eyes, and had marked out in his own fancy a mode of cure to suit himself. So with many who presume to seek the grace of God in the Gospel.—*Terry*. He himself tells what he had expected. Elisha's brief answer sounds to him like scorn.—*Lange*. And strike (R. V. wave) his hand over the place—The verb is the one so constantly used to describe the manner of the wave-offering (Exod. 29. 24, 26; Lev. 9. 21; 14. 12, 24). It is also used of waving the hand as a signal (Isa. 10. 32; 18. 2), or in anger (Zech. 2. 9). Naaman's notion seems to have been that Elisha would rub his hand backward and forward, over the affected parts; or perhaps make passes over them.—*Cambridge Bible*. A prevalent superstition in the East, that the hand of a king, or person of great sanctity, waved over a sore, will heal it.—*Bible Commentary*. Abana . . . Pharpar—See Introductory Note on Places. Better than all the waters of Israel—It was natural for the Syrian captain to prefer the streams of his own land to those of an enemy's country. The Jordan is described by Robinson as a "deep, sluggish, discoloured stream;" and as it flows in its deep bed through wild, desolate jungles, until it empties into the Dead Sea, Naaman might have thought it a useless river in comparison with those limpid rivers of Damascus, which, flowing through the great plain, change it from a desert to a paradise.—*Terry*. Once and again we crossed the Barada (Abana) by low bridges; and as we beheld its fertilizing powers, and recalled the barren sides of Jordan, we could but sympathize with the natural feeling of Naaman.—*Tristram*.

Carnal vision. Nowhere shall we find a truer pattern of the disposition of nature: how she is altogether led by sense and reason; how she fondly judges of all objects by the appearance; how she acquaints herself with the common road of God's proceedings; how she sticks to her own principles; how she misconstrues the intentions of God; how she over-conceals her own; how she dis-

Authorized Version.

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee *do some great thing*, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jor'dan, according to the saying of the man of God; and ¹⁰his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he ¹¹was clean.

Revised Version.

13 rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee *do some great thing*, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped *himself* seven times in Jor'dan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

¹⁰ Job 33. 25. — ¹¹ Luke 4. 37.

dains the mean condition of others: how she upbraids her opposites with the proud comparison of her own privileges. Nature is never but like herself. No marvel if carnal minds despise the foolishness of preaching, the simplicity of sacraments, the homeliness of ceremonies, the seeming inefficacy of censures. These men look upon Jordan with Syrian eyes; one drop of whose waters, set apart by divine ordination, hath more virtue than all the streams of Abana and Pharpar.—*Bishop Hall.*

Thousands who are sad and heavy laden, under the consciousness of the spiritual misery of sin and death, would be glad if the Word would order them to the utmost end of the earth, and would command them to make the pilgrimage without shoes under their feet, or covering upon their heads, and to give all their goods to the poor, and to brand and torture their bodies with chastisements, because that would correspond to their sensual feeling, and to preconceived opinion; but they cannot reconcile themselves to the Gospel of the grace of God, that he sent his Son into the world as a propitiation for sin. 1 John 4. 10.—*Menken.*

Prejudice hinders good. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Naaman as a type of the rationalist. The *a priori* notions which men form, which become prejudices in their minds, and by which they measure things. They invent a God in their own minds, and go to the Bible to see if they find the same God there; if not, they reject him. They form *a priori* notions of Christ, of the Bible, of religion, and the way in which religion ought to be presented to them, of prayer, of Providence, of the sacraments, etc. If these are not satisfied they turn away angry. If the diseases of their souls cannot be healed as they have made up their minds that they ought to be healed, then they will not have them healed at all.—*W. G. Sumner.*

I thought. "I thought" is the most mighty of all mighty things on earth, and even if it is not the most ruinous of all ruinous things, it is yet certainly the most unfortunate of all unfortunate ones. "I thought" brought sin and misery and death into the world, and it prevents redemption from sin and death in the case of thousands. These thousands, if they perish in their opinion, will begin the next life with "I thought."—*Lange.*

13. His servants came near.—As the chief ministers of the king are called "servants," though they probably are of distinguished rank, so the servants of Naaman were probably persons nearly his equals in every thing except reputation, and so they could come and speak freely to him without fear of giving offense. My father.—There is no other instance where servants address their master in such terms. The word which, because it is unusual, some have endeavored to explain as a corruption, indicates the affectionate relations which existed between Naaman and those about him, and prepare us for his ready listening to their persuasion.—*Cambridge Bible.* That which Naaman believed to be contempt and rudeness really proceeded, in the case of Elisha, from genuine love to him, and humility and obedience to God.—*Lange.*

Humility is the best wisdom. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

14. Then went he down.—His rage had first gone down, and thus he was in fitter condition to undertake the journey commanded him. And dipped himself seven times.—Not only in the journey to the river, which was without any display, and merely terminated at some lonely spot on the river's brink, but also in the repeated dippings was the faith of Naaman put to the test.—*Cambridge Bible.* It is a great thing when a man is willing from his heart to submit himself to the ordinances which God has established for his salvation.—*Krummacher.* The cure was performed on the basis of God's covenant with Israel. Seven was the symbol of the covenant.—*Keil.*

NAAMAN'S CONVERSION.

Naaman undoubtedly had the religious ideas which were universal in heathendom. He regarded the gods of Syria, which he had been educated to worship, as real gods. None of them, or of their priests or prophets, could cure him of leprosy. He heard by chance the fame of Elisha, as one who wrought wonders in the name of the God of Israel. Now, no heathen would maintain that his national divinities were the only true gods. Sennacherib declared that he was conquering Judah by the command of Jehovah, whom he recognized as the god of that country. The heathen colonists whom the king of Syria brought to populate Samaria attributed the ravages of the wild beasts to the fact that the worship of the god of the country was not provided for. It was the notion of the heathen that each country had its god, so that Syrians worshiped Syrian gods and Hebrews the Hebrew god. To the heathen this seemed perfectly natural and correct. On the other hand, the Hebrews declared that Jehovah was the one only true god of all the earth, and that the gods of the heathen were nullities (vanities, English Version).^{*} Naaman did not violate the principles of his religious education when he went to Elisha; Ahaziah, when he sent to Ekron (chap. 1), did.

Naaman came with a letter from the king of Syria to the king of Israel, and he came with gifts, and in pomp—all according to heathen ideas of the means of inducing the prophet to exercise his power. He was to be armed with the influence of authority and rank; he was to appear as a great man, for whom it was well worth while for the wonder-worker to do whatever he possibly could, and he brought the material means which his experience among wizards, diviners, soothsayers, and priests had taught him to regard as indispensable.

The king of Israel was terrified at the demand; but the prophet intervened. We are surprised at this feature. If Naaman's errand was really to Elisha, the literal words of the letter would not have been a command that the king should heal him (ver. 6), but that he should command his subject, the prophet, to exercise his powers on the Syrian's behalf. Thus the king would have simply referred Naaman to Elisha for the latter to do what he could. The story is evidently so much abbreviated at this point that its smoothness is impaired. Naaman comes in all his pomp to the door of Elisha. He receives the prophet's command, and his words in verses 11 and 12 bear witness again to wide and deep heathen conceptions. In verse 11 he describes graphically the mode of performance of the heathen wizards. "I thought, he will stand [take up a ceremonious and solemn attitude] and call upon the name of his God [repeat a formula of incantation], and strike his hand upon the place [with a solemn gesture] and remove the leprosy." Had he come all that journey to be told to bathe? Could water cure leprosy? If it could, was there not the pure water of Abana and Pharpar, better far than the sluggish and muddy water of Jordan? His pomp and state were thrown away: the man of God did not even come to look at them. His high credentials were wasted; the means of cure prescribed for him might have been prescribed for the poorest outcast in Israel. The deep and permanent truth of this feature, and also of the prophet's refusal to accept money, is apparent. The difference between the Jehovah religion and the heathen religions is sharply portrayed by the contrast in each point between Naaman's expectations on the one hand, and the prophet's words and actions on the other.

The Syrian's servants suggested to him the sensible reflection that he ought not to despise the prophet's command. He went, bathed, and was cleansed. He then returned to reward the prophet, but found that the prophet did not give his help as a thing to be paid for. The Syrian was not to think that the prophet had used a power which was his own, and which might be paid for, whereby the obligation would be discharged. The service came from God; it was a free act of grace; a special blessing upon this one, and he a foreigner, while many Israelitish lepers remained uncleansed. Luke 4. 27. The prophet and his God were not at the service of any one who came and could pay a certain price; they wrought only where and when there was good reason, and when they did so the recipient of grace lay under an obligation which he never could discharge.

In regard to Naaman's words, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel," a careful scrutiny shows that the proposition is not strictly accurate, for the God of Israel is, and was, not only in Israel but in all the earth. The true proposition would be: "The God of Israel is the only true God, and he reigns over all the earth." In the very form of his

confession Naaman shows that his mind was still under the bias of the heathen idea of local deities, so that he says that there is no God anywhere else in the world but in Israel. No other had been able to heal him; but Jehovah had done so by apparently very insignificant means, hence he esteemed Jehovah true and esteemed others very lightly or not at all. It should be noticed also that the conception which he seems to have reached was that which was held by very many of the Jews; namely, that Israel alone had any God, and that the rest of the world was godless; their own gods were nullities, and Jehovah did not care for them, so that they had no god at all. He determined to devote himself to the worship of Jehovah for the rest of his days. He therefore, very naturally, in accordance with the same idea of local or territorial divinities, asked for earth from Palestine to build an altar for the worship of Jehovah. He also made one further request. His duty at his master's court (although it is difficult to understand how a leper could have had that office) was to attend his master, and support him when he went to worship in the temple of the Syrian God, Rimmon.

The idea that Naaman was "converted" to the worship of Jehovah in such a sense that he went over to the Hebrew idea of the other gods is without foundation. It is a modern idea, which has no place in this connection. Naaman did not feel at all bound to keep away from the temple of Rimmon, as an early Christian would have kept away from an idol temple. His last request to the prophet is, that when he goes into this temple in the course of his official duty, it shall not be regarded as a violation of his vow to pay all his worship, for the future, to Jehovah, to the neglect of other gods. To this the prophet answers: "Go in peace," that is, Your sincere performance of your vow shall be recognized, and this conduct shall not be interpreted as a violation of it.

The most important and most instructive feature of the story remains. It was not the water either of Jordan or of Abana which could heal, it was the obedience of this haughty general to a mandate which seemed to him frivolous and absurd. In the gospels faith is the first requisite in similar cases of healing, and so it was here also—faith and obedience. Naaman came with his mind all made up as to how he was to be healed, and he turned away in anger and disgust from the course which the prophet prescribed. Yet, when he turned back, even with a lame and half-doubting faith, and a half-unwilling obedience, he was healed. This is the permanent truth which is involved in the story. Naaman was a type of the rationalist whose philosophy provides him with *a priori* dogmas by which he measures every thing which is proposed to his faith. He turns away in contempt where faith would heal him. That is the truth which the story serves to enforce.—*Prof. W. G. Sumner.*

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Great eminence with sad defect. Ver. 1.—When the French ambassador visited the illustrious Bacon in his last illness, and found him in bed with his curtains drawn, he addressed to him this fulsome compliment: "You are like the angels, of whom we hear and read much but have not the pleasure of seeing them." The reply was, "If the complaisance of others tells me I am an angel, my infirmities tell me I am a man."

A famous ruby was offered to the English government. The report of the crown jeweler was that it was the finest he had ever seen or heard of, but that one of the "facets" was slightly fractured. That invisible fracture reduced its value many thousands of dollars, and it was rejected from the regalia of England.

When Canova was about to commence his famous statue of Napoleon his keen eye detected a tiny red line running through the splendid block of marble that at great cost had been fetched from Paros, and he refused to lay chisel upon it.

The rose has its thorns, and every day its night. Even the sun shows spots, and the sky is darkened with clouds. So defects of some kind nestle in every bosom.—*Spurgeon.*

It is the little rift within the lute
That by and by will make the music mute,
And, ever widening, slowly silence all.—*Tennyson.*

Providence chooses the right place for us. Ver. 2.—Suppose the mole should cry, "How I could have honored the Creator if I had been allowed to fly!" or the fish say, "How I

would display the wisdom of God if I could mount a tree like a bird!" How foolish. We admire the mole in its tunnels and castles, and the fish cutting the wave with agile fin, but out of these spheres they would be ridiculous. Providence appoints our surroundings so that our position is the best for us.—*Spurgeon*.

A little boy sat in front of his father and held the reins which controlled a restive horse. Unknown to the boy they passed around him and were also in his father's hand. When the father saw occasion to pull one of them the child said, with artless simplicity, "Father, I thought I was driving, but I am not; am I?"

I am as a child sitting in a boat. If left to itself at rowing, its right hand being the stronger, it would constantly keep the boat turning round and round. Without a guiding power it might be carried out of the harbor into the ocean and lost. But the father sits in the stern and causes the rudder to rectify the mistakes of the oars. When the Father guides all works for good.—*Beecher*.

Out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, molding men.—*Tennyson*.

I dare not choose my lot,
I would not if I might.
Choose thou for me, my God;
So shall I walk aright.—*Bonar*.

The importance of redeeming opportunities. Ver. 3.—"Your husband must be an exceedingly clever man" was the remark made to a lady whose husband had accomplished a wonderful work. "No," was the answer; "he is not cleverer than many other men. But the difference is he makes use of all his opportunities."

Look at yon miller! How does he grind his grist? Does he bargain that he will only grind in the west wind because its gales are healthy? No, but the east wind which searches the marrow makes the millstones revolve, and, together with north and south, it yokes to his service. So should our ups and downs be turned to advantage.—*Spurgeon*.

A widow dwelt in a cottage on a dangerous sea-shore. Many times her heart melted at the sight of wrecked vessels. One stormy night the thought occurred to her to put her lamp in the window as a beacon. She did so ever after while she lived, and thus saved many a crew from perishing.

A young man applied for the position of salesman in a large establishment. "Can you sell goods?" he was asked. "Yes, to a person who wishes to buy." "So can any one," replied the merchant; "we want men to so influence customers that they will buy whether they want or not."

The South American rain-tree absorbs moisture, and when drought sets in gives it forth again, thus refreshing vegetation. So should we render timely service.

There is one kind of diamond which, if exposed in sunlight, and then taken into a dark room, emits light. By contact with Christ we become sources of virtue to others.

Grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance.—*Tennyson*.

Miss not the occasion; by the forelock take
That subtle power, the never-halting time,
Lest a mere moment's putting off should make
Mischance almost as heavy as a crime.—*Wordsworth*.

How men cling to life. Ver. 5.—A vessel caught in a storm was sinking near shore. Many passengers were returning from the gold diggings. The only chance of escape lay in swimming. A row of strong men stood on deck binding round their waists leathern bags full of gold. They sprang into the sea till only one man was left. He saw them sink to rise no more. Looking at the gold he had dearly earned with the hope of gaining ease, and then at the distant shore, he saw he could not save it. Throwing it overboard, he sprang in, struggled for dear life, and gained the shore.

"Wherefore should I die, being so rich?" said Cardinal Beaufort, a chancellor of England. "If the whole realm would save my life I am able by policy to get it or by riches to buy it, will death not be hired?"

"Is there any thing I can do for you?" said Taylor to Dr. Wolcott, as he lay on his death-bed. The passion for life dictated the answer, "Bring me back my youth."—*Denton*.

The poorest peasant blessed with peace and health
I envy more than Croesus with his wealth.—*H. K. White*.

The power of spiritual ignorance. Ver. 6.—Rev. J. D. Gordon, a medical missionary, received a request from a native to visit his sick children. Complying promptly, he found the children dead. The native charged him with causing their death, and tomahawked him on the spot.

Hugh Miller climbed a lofty cliff for a raven's nest. Within six feet of the prize he reached a very smooth rock. Examining this, he saw it was chlorite—a rock too slippery for any foothold.—He gave up the project. Five years later a famous cragsman reached the same point. Knowing nothing of chlorite, he ventured on the smooth rock, was shot over the precipice, and killed.

Müller, the great physiologist, was a zealous Romanist. He once knelt in prayer before some relics. Suddenly jumping up, he exclaimed, "These are the bones of an ass!" With others they passed for those of some saint.

A little boy was born blind. After being successfully operated on, he gazed on the earth and sky for the first time. "O mother!" he cried, "why didn't you tell me it was so beautiful?" "I tried, dear," she replied, "but you could not understand me." Without spiritual sight error is inevitable.

Brainerd says of the American Indians: "When I instructed them about Christ's miracles they referred to similar wonders performed by their divinities—a fatal obstruction to their conversion."

To the jaundiced honey tastes bitter, and those bitten by mad dogs fear water. A false opinion has no less power than the bile in the one case, or the poison in the other.—*Aurelius*.

Ignorance is the dominion of absurdity.—*Froude*.

Zeal for God. Ver. 7.—Cromwell, in announcing the victory at Naseby to the House of Commons, said: "This is none other but the hand of God, and to him alone give the glory wherein none are to share with him."

When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was presented to him in a dream a pillar of fire with this motto: "He is all on fire, a-light from God."—*Brooks*.

Professor Melville, of St. Andrew's, Scotland, was very zealous for the cause of God, in the reign of James VI. When some one blamed him for being too hot and fiery he only said: "If you see my fire go downward put it out, but if it go upward let it return to its own place."

"Dr. Bellamy made God big," said an old negro to Dr. Backus, his successor.

There is a limit beyond which patience becomes pusillanimity and charity cowardice.—*W. A. D.*

Externals no index to true greatness. Ver. 9.—Johnson once went prying about Goldsmith's lodgings. "I shall soon be in better lodgings than these," said Goldsmith. "Never mind, sir," replied Johnson. "Your reputation renders you independent of outward show."

Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, was asked by his stupid brother to make a great man of him. "Brother," said the bishop, "if your plow is broken I'll pay for the mending of it, or if your ox die I'll buy you another, but I cannot make you great. A plowman I found you, and such I must leave you."—*Smiles*.

Lysanias held that beauty gains little, and deformity loses much, by gaudy attire. He refused rich garments Dionysius sent to his daughters, saying, "They would only make unhappy faces more remarkable."

Nothing is more simple than greatness; indeed to be simple, is to be great.—*Emerson*.

Dr. Watts, in company with friends, overheard a stranger say, "What! is this the great Dr. Watts?" Turning to the questioner, the doctor repeated the verse:

Were I so tall to reach the pole,
Or grasp the ocean in my span,
I must be measured by my soul,
The mind's the standard of the man.

The soul of this man is his clothes.—*Shakespeare.*

Plain without pomp, and rich without a show.—*Dryden.*

Many a crown covers a bald forehead.—*E. B. Browning.*

Hard for pride to come down. Ver. 10.—Naturalists find it less easy to teach a mountain flower to accommodate itself to a low locality than to persuade one which belongs to the valley to live at a lofty elevation.—*Guthrie.*

A Spaniard in South America suffered severely from gout, but refused to be cured by an Indian. "I know," said he, "he is a famous physician, and would most certainly cure me; but he is an Indian, and would expect attentions I cannot pay to a man of color. I prefer remaining as I am.—*Spurgeon.*

But man, proud man,
Drest in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.—*Shakespeare.*

Prejudice hinders good. Vers. 11, 12.—A lady who excelled in making wax flowers and fruit was criticised severely by her friends, and her work decried, as she thought unjustly. She convicted them by showing them an apple, which they found fault with as to shape, color, etc. When they had finished, the lady *cut the apple and ate it.*

A man said to Mr. Dawson, "I like your sermon very much, but the after-meetings I despise. When the prayer-meeting begins I always go up into the gallery and look down." "Well," said he, "the reason is you go on the top of your neighbor's house and look down his chimney to examine his fire, and you only get smoke in your eyes.—*Talmage.*

Sir H. Holland, after describing a simple but efficacious course of practice in dealing with an obstinate complaint, says: "The simplicity of the means forms a hinderance to their sufficient application." A shrewd medical observer says country patients, when seriously ill, insist upon drastic treatment; gentle measures they resent as an imputation on the gravity of the case.—*Jacoz.*

Humility is the best wisdom. Ver. 13.—Our humiliations work out joys. The way a drop of rain comes to sing in the top of a tree all summer long is by going down to the roots first, and thence ascending to the boughs.—*Beecher.*

A French general, riding on horseback at the head of his troops, heard a soldier complain, "It is easier to ride than to walk." Dismounting, he compelled the soldier to get on. Coming through a ravine a bullet struck the rider, and he fell dead. Then the general said, "It is safer to walk than to ride!"

King Edward invited Leolin, Prince of Wales, then on the opposite shore, to a conference about matters in dispute between them, but Leolin refused. Edward passed over to him, on which he leaped into the water, and said, "Most wise king, your humility has conquered my pride, and your wisdom triumphed over my folly. Mount on my neck, which I have exalted against you, and enter the country your wisdom has made your own," and, taking him on his shoulders, he did him homage.

Shall we presume to alter the angle at which God chooses to be worshiped?—*Thoreau.*

"Take me, break me, make me!" should be the cry of all who wish to get most, be most, and do most.

The ostentation of Philotas urged his father to utter the simple rebuke, "My son, be less!" John Bunyan quaintly says:

He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

Wisdom is oftentimes nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar.—*Wordsworth.*

TEACHING HINTS.

In this lesson no one can fail to note the spiritual analogies which run parallel with the line of incidenta. The facts should be stated, and the applications made all through the story.

1. **The leper.** Take Naaman's condition as a type of the sinner's, noting that sin, like leprosy, is no respecter of persons, and that Naaman, though "a great man," was after all a leper. There are four traits in which leprosy stands as a type of sin.

1.) It was *hereditary*, born in the blood. The leper's child was almost sure to have leprosy, though in infancy his body gave no sign of the malady.

2.) It was *defiling*. The teacher should use discretion in describing the loathsome aspects of leprosy, but should enforce the parallel between it and sin in the heart. Among the Israelites leprosy shut the sufferer out of all association with the pure; so sin severs from the fellowship of the holy.

3.) It was *deceptive*. The leper was often the last to suspect his danger, for the disease was painless in its early stages. A leading lawyer and public official in the Sandwich Islands once overturned a lighted lamp upon his hand, and was surprised to find that it caused no pain. At last it dawned upon his mind that he was a leper. He resigned his offices and went to the lepers' island, of which he was made governor. There he died six years later.

4.) It was *incurable*. Show what a light is cast on the helplessness of physicians with regard to leprosy when the king said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive!" etc. Not even a king could cure a leper. So is it with the disease of sin: none but God can heal it.

2. **The captive.** Show the kind, forgiving, and helpful spirit of the young maiden, through whom the captain learned about the healer. Show, too, how "faith cometh by hearing;" and how a child may point others to salvation.

3. **The message.** Tell the story of the journey to Samaria, indicating the route upon the map as nearly as possible; thence to the Jordan, and the return to Samaria. It is uncertain whether Elisha's residence at this time was at Samaria or Jericho. Verse 8 may refer either to the city or the kingdom. Show how the pride of the leper almost lost him his cure; and how the same pride keeps many now from salvation.

4. **The cure.** Note the conditions: 1.) Humility. The captain must come down from his pride, and be as a little child. 2.) Obedience; he must follow instructions precisely. 3.) Perseverance; "seven times." What if he had stopped at the sixth bath?

5. **The transformation.** Describe the wonderful change wrought in the leper: a new body like that of a little child. Show in it the picture of the new nature given with the salvation of a soul. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

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LESSON XI.—March 15.

GEHAZI PUNISHED.—2 KINGS 5. 15-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Be sure your sin will find you out.—Num. 32. 23.

Environments.—This incident followed immediately after that narrated in our last lesson, and the **Time, Place, and Rulers** are the same.

Authorized Version.

15 And 'he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now 'I know that *there is* 'no God in all the earth, but in Is'ra-el: now therefore, I pray thee, take 'a blessing of thy servant.

16 But he said, 'As the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, 'I will receive

Revised Version.

15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Is'ra-el: now therefore, I pray thee,

16 take a 'present of thy servant. But he said, As the LORD liveth, before

¹ Luke 17. 15. — ² Rom. 10. 10. — ³ Dan. 2. 47; 3. 29; 6. 26, 27. — ⁴ Gen. 23. 11. — ⁵ Chap. 3. 14. — ⁶ Gen. 14. 22; Matt. 10. 8; Acts 8. 18, 20.

¹ Heb. *blessing*.

I. THE GRATEFUL SYRIAN. Verses 15-19.

15, 16. **He returned.**—What a glad journey up the sloping meadows to the city gate! **Came, and stood.**—Naman's feelings and attitude are alike changed, and the prophet now gladly shows himself to him.—*Lumby*. **No God in all the earth, but in Israel.**—See article on NAAMAN'S CONVERSION, page 122. A little before he had boasted of the rivers of Damascus, but he cannot henceforth reverence her gods.—*Terry*. **Take a blessing of thy servant.**—Because with a present in the East are generally given good wishes and benediction, the Hebrews frequently used the word "blessing" for a gift.—*Lumby*. **I will receive none.**—It seems to have been a custom for the prophets to receive presents from those who consulted them (1 Sam. 9. 7), and from chap. 8. 8, 9 it is not certain but that on another occasion Elisha himself received a present from the king of Syria; why, then, did he refuse to accept one from Naaman? The reason is found in Elisha's own words (ver. 26), "Is it a time to receive money and garments," etc. It was a time of hypocrisy and avarice among the professed prophets and priests in the northern kingdom, and this fact had brought the sacred office into di-repute and contempt among the people. It was wise, therefore, for Elisha, in connection with this great miracle, to decline the rich present of Naaman, so that all might know that the mighty works of God's grace were free, and that avarice dwelt not in the heart of the true prophet of Jehovah.—*Terry*. Besides, Elisha must know that he was being mentally contrasted by Naaman with the greedy heathen priests of Damascus. They pretended to a certain magical power, which was "for sale" as medical and legal skill are to-day, but the Hebrew prophet was a mere instrument of Jehovah. Naaman's gratitude was not due to Elisha, but to Elisha's God. **He urged him.**—His whole-souled gratitude was sadly disappointed.

The works of God justify his claims. Ver. 15. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Naaman came to Samaria a skeptic; but he was fair-minded, and all his pretensions and doubts departed with his leprosy. If modern skeptics were as frank as he most of their difficulties would similarly vanish. To-day the world has better circumstantial evidence to support God's claims than Naaman had in his healed body.

Gratitude should take practical form. Ver. 15. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The apostle ridicules the men who say, "Be ye warm, be ye clothed," but allow the poor to continue in hunger and the

Authorized Version.

none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

17 And Na'a-man said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.

Revised Version.

whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused. And Na'a-man said, If not, yet I pray thee let there be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth; for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto

shivers. Gratitude, if genuine, is as practical as genuine benevolence. The boy who has any proper appreciation of a mother's self-denial shows it. There is no such thing as permanently concealed gratitude.

Religion should not be made a stepping-stone to temporal gain. Ver. 18. See ILLUSTRATIONS. God will take care of all desirable secular results. Simon Magus, Ananias, and many others sought to mingle selfish aims with heart religion. It cannot be done. As the mistletoe strangles the oak it thrives upon, so such conduct leads to spiritual ruin.

17, 18. Two mules' burden of earth—Perhaps to make an altar to the God of Israel. The altar of burnt-offering, according to the Mosaic law, was to be made of earth. Exod. 20. 24. But precisely what his motive was in this proposal—whether he thought that God could be acceptably worshiped only on his own soil, or he wished, when far away from Jordan, to have the earth of Palestine to rub himself with, which the Orientals use as a substitute for water; and whether by making such a request of Elisha he thought the prophet's grant of it would impart some virtue; or whether, like the modern Jews and Mohammedans, he resolved to have a portion of this "holy earth" for his nightly pillow—it is not easy to say. But in any case it is not strange to find such notions in so newly converted a heathen.—*Jamieson*. His request is illustrated by the reverence Mohammedans have for the soil of Mecca. The man accounts himself happy who has in his possession the smallest portion of this for use in his devotions. He carries it about his person in a small bag, and in his prayers he deposits this before him upon the ground in such a manner that, in his frequent prostrations, the head comes down upon this morsel of sacred soil, so that in some sort he may be said to worship thereon.—*Kittó*. The same sentiment still survives. When here and there in Christian lands we hear the names Bethany, Bethlehem, Zion, etc., what are they but holy places transferred, so far as we can transfer them, from their original location into our life and thought and feeling. Nor was it without its own peculiar value in this instance. The altar built of the soil of Israel, in a foreign land, was an indicator of the way to Israel and to Israel's God; a physical confession which required strong courage, for it might call down persecution, disgrace, and death. So now it is an act of faith when a messenger of the faith sets up the cross in the midst of a mighty heathen people.—*Bähr*. Will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice—This was a solemn transfer of allegiance from Rimmon to Jehovah. The other gods are worth nothing. This much he has learnt, and so he will pay



BOWING AT WORSHIP.

Authorized Version.

18 In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rim'mon to worship there, and he 'leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rim'mon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rim'mon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

Revised Version.

18 the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant; when my master goeth into the house of Rim'mon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rim'mon, when I bow myself in the house of Rim'mon, the LORD par-

* Chap. 7, 2, 17.

them no homage.—*Cambridge Bible.* My master—The king of Syria.—*Lange.* The original of verse 18 may without strain be read in the past and not in the future tense: "For this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, for that when my master hath gone into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he hath leaned upon mine hand, that I also have bowed myself in the house of Rimmon; for my worshiping in the house of Rimmon the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing."—*Clarke.* But the probability is that it referred to the future, and that Naaman feared some inconsistency in his conduct. He will himself offer no more sacrifices to Rimmon; but he must attend the king at worship and must bow when he bows, or give serious offense. He sets his difficulty before Elisha, and the prophet, regarding this degree of faith and obedience as all that could be expected from his amount of light, gives him a comforting answer. We must judge both Naaman and the prophet according to the times in which they lived. It was impossible for the pagan at once to cast away all his old ideas, and even the prophet had no such light as we have concerning God's message to the heathen. The Jew has not either in ancient or in modern times been a missionary; and we need not judge Elisha hardly, because he felt no call to rebuke the half-converted heathen for his imperfect service. The command, "Go ye out into all the world," was not yet given.—*Cambridge Bible.* Naaman's request shows that he had a tender conscience, which decided to avoid even the appearance of denying Jehovah. Such scruples would not have occurred to one who was wavering between service to God and service to the gods. His urgency is marked by the repetition of the words: *when I bow down.*—*Lange.* Goeth into the house of Rimmon—The temple erected in honor of this Syrian deity, and in which the idol was pompously worshiped. This is the only scriptural mention of this false god, but traces of the name appear in *Tabrimon* (1 Kings 15. 18) and *Hadad-rimmon* (Zech. 12. 11). As to the origin and signification of the name no settled opinion can well be formed. As Rimmon signifies a pomegranate some have thought this deity was the emblem or personification of some fertilizing principle in nature, and hence presenting a relic of the ancient tree-worship of the East. Others take Rimmon to be "the abbreviated form of Hadad-rimmon, Hadad being the sun-god of the Syrians. Combining this with the pomegranate, which was his symbol, Hadad-rimmon would then be the sun god of the later summer, who ripens the pomegranate and other later fruits, and, after infusing into them his productive power, dies, and is mourned with the "mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." Zech. 12. 11. But *Selden*, *Gesenius*, and others derive the word from the root, *to be high*, and understand it as the name of the supreme Syrian god, the "most high." He leaneth on my hand.—See 2 Kings 7. 17. I bow myself—He wishes to be a loyal subject and servant of his king, but he cannot truly worship Rimmon. He hopes, therefore, to be excusable, if, as a loyal subject, he submits to go through the mere forms of service which his king requires, but does not allow his heart to engage in the idol-worship.—*Terry.*

We ought to guard against half-way measures in religion. See ILLUSTRATIONS. If the Lord be God, worship him—if Baal, Rimmon, Mammon, Fashion, or Pleasure, or any other creature, worship them; but we cannot serve both.

How deeply does Naaman shame Christians who, even in Christian countries, do not dare to confess Christ by word and deed. His transfer of two mules' burden of earth could not be made secretly. In the very heart of heathendom he proposes to maintain Jehovah's worship.

How much greater our responsibility than Naaman's! He had no Bible, no true religious instruction, no spiritual companionship, no pure public worship, and only one interview with a prophet; and, on the other hand, a great heritage of heathenish superstition. We have a blessing much greater than the *spirit* of prophecy—its *fulfillment*. In the full sunlight of these gospel days we need make no such request as this of Naaman's.

Authorized Version.

19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him ^a a little way.

20 But Ge-ha'zi, the servant of E-li'sha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Na'a-man this Syr'i-an, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, *as* the LORD liveth, I will run after ^a him, and take somewhat of him.

21 So Ge-ha'zi followed after Na'a-man. And when Na'a-man saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, ^b Is all well?

Revised Version.

19 don thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him ^a a little way.

20 But Ge-ha'zi, the servant of E-li'sha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared this Na'a-man the Syr'i-an, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take

21 somewhat of him. So Ge-ha'zi followed after Na'a-man. And when Na'a-man saw one running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to

^a A little piece of ground, as Gen. 28. 16.—^b Ps. 10. 3; Prov. 18. 21; Luke 12. 15; Col. 2. 5; 1 Tim. 6. 10.—^b Is there peace?

^a Or, some way.

19. Go in peace.—We are not to consider this answer as implying that service of God and service of Rimmon might be combined without incongruity. The prophet appears rather to be willing to leave the good seed already sown to bear fruit in due season. Being sown of God it must fructify, and peace would be the result of its further development.—*Cambridge Bible.* A little way.—The expression, literally signifying "a length of country," is very indefinite. It is found only here and in Gen. 35. 16; 48. 7. We may estimate its length roughly by considering how far Gehazi could have gone if he had to overtake a mounted cavalcade. It could not be very far.—*Lumby.*

Let us be sure that if a Christian's purposes are strong and pure God will guide his conscience aright. This should not close our mouths in the advocacy of what we know to be right, but it may well help us to be both charitable and patient.

II. THE GREEDY SERVANT. Verse 20-27.

20. Hath spared Naaman this Syrian.—Notice the Revised Version, *this Naaman the Syrian*. The pronoun qualifies the whole expression and breathes a spirit of contempt, as if a Gentile should have been taxed.—*Terry.* Gehazi had been in attendance on Elisha, and had heard the whole conversation. There seems to have been no need for an interpreter. The dialects of the whole country were, no doubt, much akin, and the people could readily understand each other.—*Cambridge Bible.* The oath, "As the Lord liveth," stands in contrast with that of Elisha. Ver 16. Blinded by his avarice, Gehazi considers it right before God to take pay, just as Elisha, in his fidelity, considers it right before God to accept nothing.—*Lange.* How little the words meant for Gehazi we can see, when they come to his lips amid his thoughts of the deceit he is meditating.—*Lumby.* A perverse heart, stubbornly bent on sinning, may even presume to swear its darling sin into a virtue.—*Terry.*

How much men will risk for gold! See ILLUSTRATIONS. And how hazardous is the risk! Even success in its pursuit cannot bring happiness. "And he that maketh haste to be rich falleth into a snare."

False judgment. Gehazi speaks contemptuously of Naaman because he is a Syrian and not an Israelite, although he was far better than Gehazi. There is much similar misjudgment nowadays. God is no respecter of persons, and he who closely follows God will not permit his prejudices to arise against any human being—whether Italian, Negro, Indian, or Chinese, poor, depraved, illiterate, or dirty. Much of what we most pride ourselves on is the simple outcome of our environments—the result of God's merciful providence, and not of our own efforts. What a man thinketh in his heart that is he.

21, 24. When Naaman saw him.—On an Eastern road the travelers are not numerous, and any one in hot pursuit would at once be noticed, and it would be felt that he was anxious that the travelers in front should halt.—*Cambridge Bible.* The Revised Version has "one" instead of "him." He lighted down from the chariot to meet him.—As Gehazi approached, Naaman recognized him; for Gehazi may have been the messenger first sent to bid the Syrian go and wash in Jordan, and he had clearly been by his master's side during the subsequent interview. Anxious,

Authorized Version.

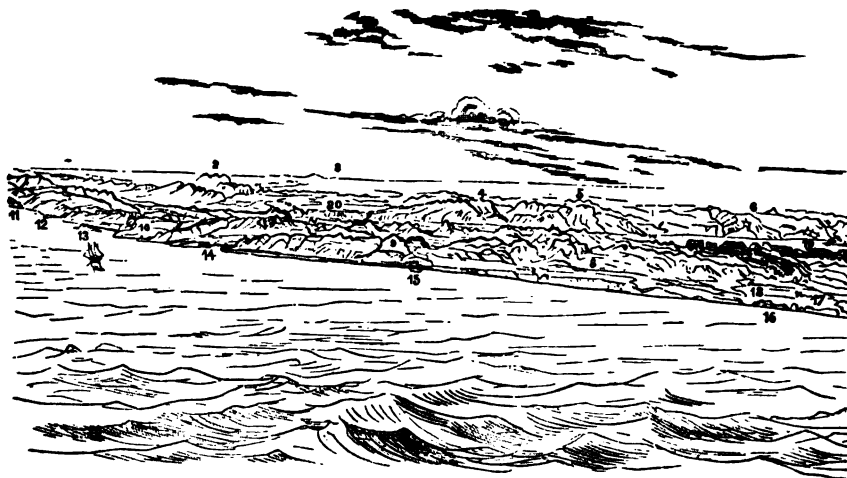
22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount E'phra-im two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

23 And Na'a-man said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and

Revised Version.

22 meet him, and said, Is all well? And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from the hill country of E'phra-im two young men of the sons of the prophets; give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of raiment. And Na'a-man said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two

therefore, to show his gratitude, the superior lights down from his chariot. This was an act of much condescension, and is an index of Naaman's feeling.—*Lumby*. Naaman honored the prophet in his servant. He infers that something unfortunate for the prophet has occurred. In reply to Gehazi's assertion (ver. 22) he urges him to accept two talents, one for each prophet-disciple, and he causes the money to be borne before Gehazi in two sacks, as a mark of his eager willingness.—*Lange*. My master hath sent me—Naaman would naturally rejoice at hearing that circum-



PALESTINE FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN.

- 1—Mountains of Lebanon.
- 2—Mount Hermon.
- 3—Mountains of Hauran.
- 4—Mountains of Bashan.
- 5—Mountains of Gilead.

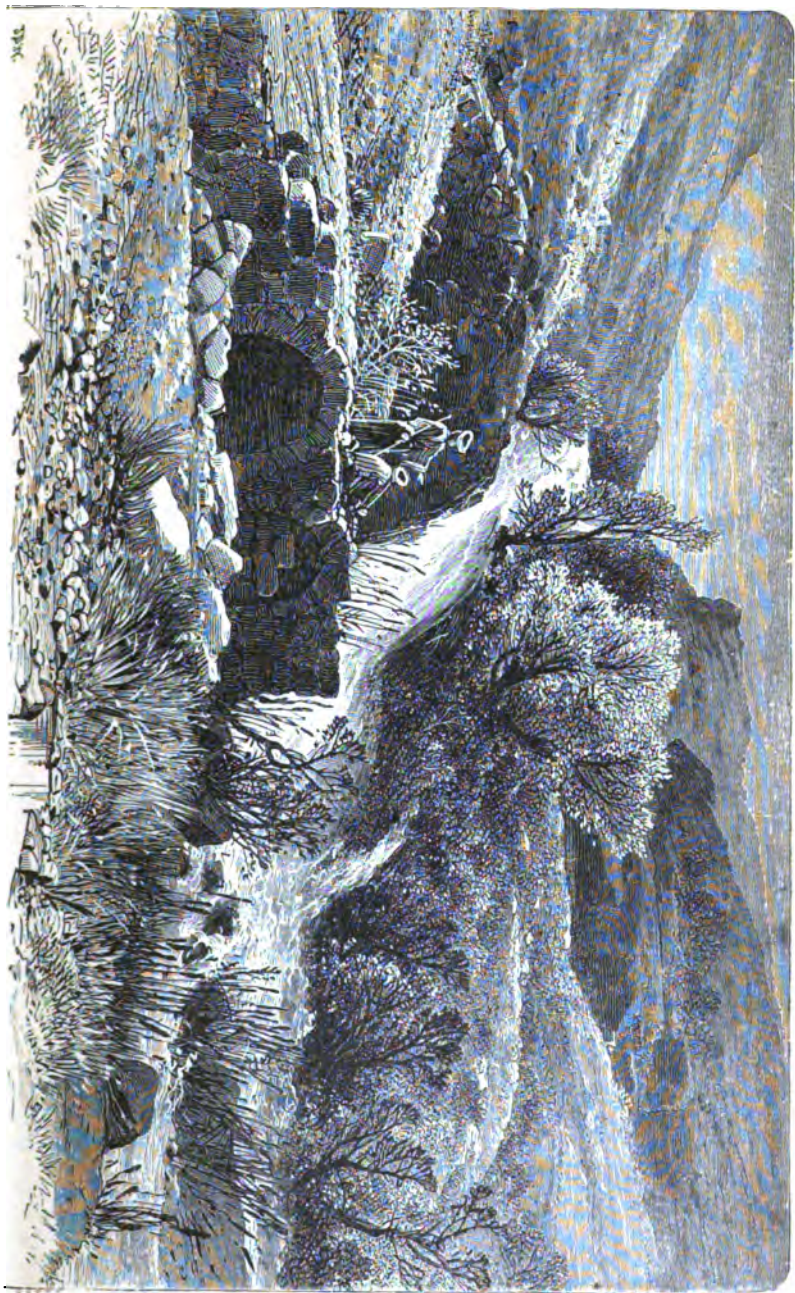
- 6—Mountains of Moab.
- 7—Mountains of Judea.
- 8—Mountains of Samaria.
- 9—Mount Carmel.
- 10—Ladder of Tyre.

- 11—Beyrout.
- 12—Sidon.
- 13—Tyre.
- 14—Acre.
- 15—Caesarea.

- 16—Joppa.
- 17—Armathea.
- 18—Lydda.
- 19—Dead Sea.
- 20—Sea of Galilee.

stances had wrought for an acceptance of the present, which for himself the prophet had refused.—*Cambridge Bible*. From Mount Ephraim (R. V., the hill country of Ephraim)—The Gilgal mentioned in the previous chapter (4. 38) seems to have been near the hill country of Ephraim. There, we know, there was a college of prophets, and in the neighborhood may have been others. From all these centers the members would come to Elisha for counsel. Gehazi uses one of the probably common incidents of the prophet's life to form the foundation for his deceit. The communities of prophets were doubtless poor, and few things were more likely than that they should reach Samaria in need both of money and clothing. The story was full of plausibility.—*Cambridge Bible*. A talent of silver—Though a large sum to ask for as aid to the prophet, it would appear but little to the man who had brought ten times as much with him, in addition to six thousand shekels of gold. Hence he gives him twice what he asks, which Gehazi must have counted a wondrous gain. Take two talents—Worth, perhaps, \$3,320. In two bags—The

POURCE OF THE ABANA.



Authorized Version.

laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him.

24 And when he came to the 'tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house; and he let the men go, and they departed.

25 But he went in, and 'stood before his master. And E-li'sha said unto him, Whence *comest thou*, Ge-ha'zi? And he said, Thy servant went 'no whither.

26 And 'he said unto him, Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it* a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and

Revised Version.

bags, with two changes of raiment, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.

24 And when he came to the 'hill, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

25 But he went up in, and stood before his master. And E-li'sha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Ge-ha'zi? And he said, Thy servant went no

26 whither. And he said unto him, 'Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it* a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and

c Or, secret place.—9 Prov. 20, 20; Ezech. 22, 31.—d Not hither or thither: Prov. 12, 22; Acts 5, 2.

3 Heb. *Ophel*.—4 Or, *Mine heart went not from me, when etc.*

money was put into the bag, and the opening tied up. The word translated "bags" occurs in the list of female finery in Isa. 3. 22, and is rendered by Revised Version "satchels." Probably the bag was of an ornamental character, as the root word signifies "to engrave." Perhaps there was some embroidery or net-work in its formation.—*Lumby*. Upon two of his servants—Naaman's servants. The gift was a weight which one man could not well carry. When he came to the tower—Rather, *to the hill*. Probably some eminence near the house of Elisha. All Samaria was hilly in character. See 1 Kings 16. 24. The narrative by this allusion to a locality, as though it were well known, incidentally shows its historic character, and appears to go back in its early form to close upon the date of the events. He took them from their hand—Though they were heavy enough for two men, he must now contrive to carry them himself, that he may attract less attention, and run no risk of being found out.—*Cambridge Bible*. They departed—With the healthful impression of the freedom of God's grace, which Elisha had taken so much pains to make, partially effaced from their minds and the mind of Naaman.

Grace transforms pride into humility. Ver. 21. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Pride and true Christianity are incompatible. Every fuller revelation which has come to the world since Naaman's day has made plainer God's detestation of pride. Notice the attitude of Jesus to the proud and to the humble. Sin's worst victims scruple at nothing. Vers. 20, 22, 25. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

One sinner destroyeth much good. Elisha's refusal of Naaman's gift was an object lesson of the greatest value to the Syrians, if it could have been well learned. Gehazi's covetousness not only destroyed its effects but made it appear like ostentatious pretense.

25. Stood before his master—He would let his absence be as little noted as possible. In the East the servants are usually kept in waiting. Hence the phrase "to stand before" is frequent in connection with Oriental service. Thus David "stands before" Saul (1 Sam. 16. 21, 22), so of Abishag. 1 Kings 1. 2; see also 1 Kings 10. 8; Dan. 1, 5, etc.—*Cambridge Bible*. Whence comest thou, Gehazi?—Happy are they of whom there is no need to ask this question; who can give an account without falsehood of all the paths in which they have walked, and of all the places in which they have been.—*Lange*. Thy servant went no whither—Evidently Gehazi had no adequate appreciation of his privileges.

This is the curse which rests upon a lie, that the liar seeks to escape from it by new lies, and so involves himself more and more in the net.—*Menken*.

26. Went not mine heart with thee—Elisha, by divine revelation, was enabled to see all Gehazi's actions and read the wickedness of his heart. So Peter, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Acts 5. 1-11. God sees all our actions. If he arms his prophets with the gift of vision which brings hidden sin to the light, how much more will he, before whose judgment-seat we shall have to appear, bring that to light which now lies hidden in darkness, and reveal the secret counsels of the heart!—*Menken*. Is it a time to receive money—Shall we, by covetousness, identify ourselves with the corrupt and lying priests and prophets who bring dishonor on

Authorized Version.

vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?

27 The leprosy therefore of Na'a-man¹⁰ shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper¹¹ *as white as snow*.

Revised Version.

olive yards and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men-servants and maid-servants? The leprosy therefore of Na'a-man shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper *as white as snow*.

¹⁰ Acts 18, 9. — ¹¹ 1 Tim. 6, 10. — ¹² Exod 4, 6; Num. 12, 10; chap. 15, 5.

Jehovah's name, and on the holy office, by receiving, with avaricious grasp, money and garments and cattle and servants? However right and proper in itself it might be for priests or prophets to receive such gifts under ordinary circumstances, the times then forbade. Such gifts had in Israel become so associated with priestly covetousness and venality that it behooved the true prophet to decline them.—*Terry*.

The guilt of Gehazi. His act was not a product of mere vulgar avarice, which shrinks back from no falsehood. By it he made his master, all of whose intercourse with him ought to have exercised a purifying influence upon him, a liar, and his oath (ver. 16) an empty phrase. He did not leave Naaman with the undimmed conviction that all the grace he had experienced had come to him gratis, and that "there was a prophet in Israel." He did not fear to stain the work which God had done upon a heathen for the glory of his name, and thereby he denied the Holy One, whose might he had just seen manifested upon Naaman. His act was a betrayal of the prophet, of Naaman, and of Jehovah.—*Lange*. Let not his punishment of Gehazi be thought too severe. Important principles were involved in his conduct, for, according to verse 26, it was a time when the representatives of the sacred office needed to observe the greatest caution against the spirit of worldliness. Then, too, Gehazi's acts on this occasion were a complication of wickedness. He showed contempt for the judgment of his master in the matter of receiving gifts; he meanly misrepresented the prophet by making him ask for what Naaman had just heard him most positively refuse; he invented a false story to blind the eyes of Naaman; and finally told a miserable lie in the hope of escaping detection from Elisha. Add to all this the foul spirit of covetousness that actuated him through all this evil course, and his course will not appear too great.—*Terry*.

Good men should weigh well the tendency of their influence. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Elisha did so; Gehazi failed here as at other points. Many a Christian does great harm by little omissions and discourtesies.

27. The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee—O heavy talents of Gehazi! O the horror of this one unchangeable suit! How much better had been a light purse and a homely coat, with a sound body and a clear soul.—*Bishop Hall*. The leprosy of Naaman (ver. 27) became the leprosy of Gehazi; as Naaman was a living monument of the saving might and grace of Jehovah, so Gehazi was a monument of the retributive justice of the Holy One in Israel; a living warning and threat for the entire people.—*Bähr*. It was not the covetousness alone that was punished; but, at the same time, the ill use made of the prophet's name to gain an object prompted by a mean covetousness, and the attempt to conceal it by lying.—*Keil*. The deceitfulness of riches—How did the raiment of Damascus appear to the leper, or the pieces of silver to the wretched outcast! How often must he have desired to buy back again with all his treasures one day of his healthful poverty! Then, too, the lost peace of God. Alas! Most incomprehensible, most depraved, most indestructible, and terrible of all deceits, deceit of riches, who fears thee, as we all should fear thee?—*Lange*. **Unto thy seed forever**—Who can tell but that the victims of this horrid plague, now seen about the city (Samarina) and at Nablus, the present home of all the Samaritans, may be the heirs of this heritage of Gehazi!—*Thomson*. The extending of his curse to his children after him is but another exhibition of the terrible consequences of human sinfulness. Gehazi's posterity were innocent of their father's sins, but, like many others, they were compelled to bear the consequences of ancestral crimes. That thousands of innocents are subjected to suffering because of the sins of others is a fact which none can deny. Why this is permitted, under the government of an all-wise God, is a question which he has not seen fit fully to answer.—*Terry*. **He went out from his presence**—And from that time forth he seems not again to have ministered unto Elisha, though he might afterward have been often called the servant of Elisha. See chap. 8, 4.—*Terry*. **A leper as white as snow**—The mo-

ment the curse was pronounced, that moment the sign of the leprosy began to appear. The white shining spots were the sign that the infection had taken place.—*Clarke*. As the incrustation of leprosy is sometimes rather rose-colored than white, it seems likely that the point of the comparison is not the whiteness only, but that likeness which it bears to a light down-like covering, as if the limbs had been sprinkled over in the manner, though not always with the color, of snow.—*Cambridge Bible*.

A curse to children. A father absorbed in pursuit of wealth, a mother absorbed in fashion, will bring up corrupt and neglected children. If parents love gold and fashion and display, children will hold these the chief things in life. "Thou hast gotten thee gold, but leprosy shall cleave to thee and to thy seed forever."—*Sumner*. Drunkenness and other vices blast the prospects of the children of those who indulge in them as completely as could the worst leprosy.

Punishment will be in proportion to guilt. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Earth's wisest courts make mistakes. God's judgment is infallible.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

The works of God justify his claims. Ver. 15.—A Bedouin was asked by a traveler: "How do you know there is a God?" He fixed his eyes with a stare of savage wonder on the questioner, and said: "In the same way that I know on looking at the sand when a man or beast has crossed the desert—by his foot-prints in the world around me."—*Canon Liddon*.

When *Tyndall* was walking among the clouds during a sunset upon the Alps, his companion said: "Can you behold such a scene as this and not feel there is a God?" "O," said he, "I feel it, I know it, I rejoice in it."—*Beecher*.

Gratitude should take a practical form. Ver. 15.—*Spurgeon* tells of a deacon who in his old age was reduced to want, and unable to fulfill the duties of his office. His brethren held a meeting at which resolutions were passed expressing their appreciation of his long and faithful services. They then engaged in prayer for him, during which a loud knock came to the door and a young man entered. When they ceased, he said: "Father cannot come to the meeting, but he has sent his prayers in a cart." They consisted of flour, bacon, and a quantity of other necessities.

Dr. Hall tells of a Scotchman who sung, most piously,

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small!"

and fumbled in his pocket for the smallest coin for the contribution box.

Religion should not be made a stepping-stone to temporal gain. Ver. 16.—One Sunday a shower suddenly came on, when a number of persons took shelter in *Rowland Hill's* church while he was preaching. Noticing this, he publicly remarked: "Many people are greatly to be blamed for making their religion a cloak; but I do not think those are much better who make it an umbrella."

We ought to guard against half-way measures in religion. Ver. 18.—Silk is interdicted by Mussulman law as being an excrement. They elude this prohibition by mixing a very little cotton with it. Christ's laws cannot be evaded like Mohammed's.

Richard Baxter said a good thing of some who lived in his day, that they had a "wheel-barrow religion." They "went when they were shoved."

The grounds of the Monaco gambling hell are the most beautiful in the world. I never go near them; and why? A friend of mine met M. Blanc one day. The latter inquired why he never entered his grounds. "Well," he said, "I never play, and hardly feel justified in using your grounds." "If," said M. Blanc, "it was not for respectable persons like yourself I should lose many of my customers. You contribute materially to my revenue by walking in my grounds. Others who would not enter them but for your example follow you into the gardens, and from thence to the gaming table the transition is easy."—*Spurgeon*.

Bishop W— was rebuking one of his clergy for fox-hunting. "My lord," he said, "I never go to balls!" "I perceive," said the bishop, "you allude to my having been to the Duchess of S—'s party; but I was never in the same room with the dancers." "My lord," responded the minister, "my horse and I are old, and we are never in the same field with the hounds." Each satisfied himself about a point beyond which he ought to have gone.

What men will risk for gold. Ver. 20.—In excavating Pompeii a skeleton was found with the fingers clutched around a quantity of gold.

Covetous men may be likened to those foolish apes which in some countries are caught by narrow-necked vessels: into these the corn is placed, the creatures thrust in their hands, and when they have filled them they cannot draw out their fists unless they let go the grain. Sooner than do this they submit to be captured.—*Spurgeon*.

Grace can transform pride into humility. Ver. 21.—The manufacturers of gas were once puzzled to know what to do with the coal tar left in the retorts. Chemistry, however, came to the rescue, and now thirty-six marketable articles are produced from this sticky slime. People are unconscious that the exquisite taste of some confectionery and the delicious perfume of "otto of roses" may be traced to the gas retort. Grace changes sinners into saints.

Take an ounce of the blackest slime on the footpath of a manufacturing town. It contains clay, soot, sand, and water. Let it rest, so that its elements gather like to like. The clay settles into a white earth, from which you can get the finest *porcelain*. Leave it still quiet; it becomes not only white, but clear, hard, and so set that it can gather out of light the liveliest blue rays only, refusing the rest. That is a *sapphire*. Next the sand. It will become first white, then clear and hard, and arrange itself into parallel lines, with power to reflect blue, purple, green, and red rays. That is an *opal*. The soot comes out clear at last and the hardest thing in the world, reflecting all the rays of the sun in the vividest blaze any solid thing can shoot. That is a *diamond*. The water crystallizes in the shape of a *star of snow*. So God transforms us into the heavenly.—*Ruskin*.

The higher a man gets in grace the lower he will sink in his own esteem.—*Spurgeon*.

Sin's worst victims scruple at nothing. Vers. 20, 22, 25.—When the physicians told Theotimus that except he abstained from drunkenness and licentiousness he would lose his eyes, his heart was so wedded to his sins that he answered, "*Then farewell, sweet light.*"

A traveler writes: Flocks of greedy albatrosses, petrels, and Cape pigeons crowded around our ship's stern. A hook was baited with fat, when upward of a dozen albatrosses rushed at it, and as one after another was hauled on deck the remainder kept swimming close by. Not even did those which were hooked and escaped desist from seizing the bait a second time. Too often men rush at the baits of Satan with equal infatuation.—*Spurgeon*.

Good men should weigh well the tendency of their influence. Ver. 26.—Among the high Alps the traveler is told to proceed very quietly, for on the steep slopes overhead the snow hangs so evenly balanced that the sound of a voice may destroy the equilibrium and bring down an immense avalanche that will ruin every thing in its path. In like manner our faintest touch may determine destiny.

A young lady deeply under conviction of sin had her solemn impressions dissipated by the jesting and laughter of a church member by her side.

In the reign of Charles I. the goldsmiths of London weighed several sorts of precious metals before the Privy Council. They used scales so poised that the beam would turn at the ten-hundredth part of a grain. Noy, the attorney-general, standing by said: "I shall be loth to have all my actions weighed in those scales."

There are machines used in banks which receive gold coin as a mill receives grain, for the purpose of determining whether they are of full weight. As they pass through all that are light are thrown to one side, and those of full weight to another, by unerring laws. The process is a solemn parable of how any thing beneath the standard of safety ought to be rejected.—*Arnol*.

If prevention is better than cure, precaution is better than power.—*Guthrie*.

"It is a fine thing," wrote *Sailer*, "if you can say a man never lifted a stone against his neighbor, but it is far finer if you can say he took out of the path the stones that would have caught his neighbor's feet."

I want to help you to grow as beautiful as God meant you to be when he thought of you first.—*George MacDonald*.

Punishment will be in proportion to guilt. Ver. 27.—The Egyptian queen was a fool when she dissolved her pearl in one cup of pleasure. The Indian chief was a fool when he underrated the current and launched his canoe on the rapids. He is a fool who sports with a serpent or heedlessly combats a lion. But sin brings its unerring consequences more surely than any of those.—*Talmage*.

TEACHING HINTS.

There are two people in this lesson who stand in contrast, and may suggest the two points on which to hang the teaching.

1. **Naaman.** The newly healed leper shows several traits worthy of imitation, but with them he shows certain errors of opinion, which are, however, not to be judged too harshly, in view of his ignorance of the true God and the true religion.

1.) Notice the three examples which Naaman sets us. He was *grateful* for the blessing which he had received. He was *reverent* toward the Lord who had blessed him. He was *liberal* in his offering toward the God of Israel. Naaman evinced the spirit of a sincere worshiper. Show how those who have been saved should manifest the same spirit.

2.) But we may call attention also to the mistakes of Naaman. He failed to see the spiritual quality of divine endowments, and offered Elisha money, just as if he were an ordinary necromancer or idol-priest. Ver. 15. It would have brought shame on the prophetic office for Elisha to have accepted a gift in return for a miracle. Rome to-day promises salvation just to the measure of the purchaser's means of payment.

His second error—and in his case a pardonable one—lay in his conception of the Lord Jehovah as a local divinity, who could be worshiped only on Israelite soil. Naaman knew not that he is the God of the whole earth, and that in every place worship may be rendered to him. Some think that they can be saved only at an altar, and can pray only in a church. But the home should have its altar and the bed-chamber should be an oratory.

His third error, according to one interpretation of the narrative, was an unwillingness to make an open confession of his religion. He would bow down to Rimmon, but would worship Jehovah. God expects every believer in him to own him before the world.

We can learn lessons of true service from Naaman's mistakes, as well as from his excellences.

2. **Gehazi.** Observe that Gehazi stood in the same relation to Elisha as Elisha had stood in to Elijah. He enjoyed his companionship, heard his words, shared his confidence, might have been his successor, and might have carried onward his work. We might have placed the names of Elijah, Elisha, and Gehazi together.

Notice that Gehazi fell because of covetousness, as did Achan, and as did Judas Iscariot. Trace the growth of the covetous spirit in his case: desire for gain, deceit, open falsehood. Show what God's word shows about the love of gain, and show to what crimes it leads in this age.

See how Gehazi's greed must have influenced Naaman's estimate of the prophet. He may have said: "After all, this servant of Jehovah is no better than the servants of Rimmon. He is just as eager for gain, and adds to it hypocrisy!" Naaman's soul was probably hurt by Gehazi's crime.

Observe, too, that the riches which Gehazi gained by unrighteousness brought him no benefit. What avail was it to him to wrap the garment of Naaman's gift over the skin of a leper! Yet that is what thousands of rich people are trying to do.

Notice the harm which Naaman wrought upon those who should come after him. Ver. 27. So is it with the taint of blood which the drunkard and the debauchee infuse into their offspring.

Choose between Naaman the leper and Gehazi the leper.

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LESSON XII.—March 22.

ELISHA'S DEFENDERS.—2 KINGS 6. 8-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.—2 Kings 6. 16.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.



TIME.—893 B. C.

PERSONS.—1. **The king of Syria.** Probably Ben-hadad II. His father, Ben-hadad I., has already appeared in our lessons as the ally of King Asa of Judah, and the foe of King Baasha of Israel. The second Ben-hadad inherited his father's enmity to Israel. He was very powerful, bringing thirty-two vassal kings with him to his first siege of Samaria. 1 Kings 20. 1. Ahab at first submitted to him as a vassal, but afterward under prophetic direction fought and destroyed the Syrian army, and was censured for sparing the life of the merciless Syrian king. Soon after the death of Ahab, Ben-hadad II. perfidiously renewed the war. Eight years later he was killed by Hazael, whose son, Ben-hadad III., reigned disastrously. 2. **The man of God—Elisha.** 3. **The king of Israel—**probably Jehoram, the grandson of Ahab. 4. **The servant of the man of God,** unnamed, but not Gehazi.

PLACES.—**Dothan.** A city north of Samaria, upon a hill (ver. 17) at a narrow pass in the mountains (Judg. 4. 5; 7. 3; 8. 3), in the district of the present Jinin.—*Bähr.* It was probably at this time Elisha's place of abode. The scene shifts to Dothan from the camp of Syria and the court of Israel.

Authorized Version.

8 Then the king of Syr'i-a warred against Is'ra-el, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my *camp.

a Or, encamping.

Revised Version.

8 Now the king of Syr'i-a warred against Is'ra-el; and he took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my ¹camp.

¹ Or, encamping.

I. ELISHA'S ENEMIES. Verses 8-15.



8. **Then—**Better, *now.* Whether before or after the cure of Naaman, we have no indication.—*Lumby.* **The king of Syria—**Ben-hadad. See note on **PERSONS** and compare verse 24. **Warred against Israel—**It is clear that Syria was a most formidable adversary to Israel at this period. The inroads described first in this chapter appear to have been made by bands of plunderers under the direction of the king. But when Ben-hadad gathered all his host and came and besieged Samaria the warfare was of a different kind.—*Lumby.* **His servants—***His aides-de-camp.* **My camp—**Ben-hadad probably threw his troops into ambuscades, expecting to surprise and ensnare the forces which the king of Israel might send against him.—*Terry.*

Worldly men put confidence in human stratagem. See **ILLUSTRATIONS.** They have no other resource. But Christians need never resort to trickery. "The God who rules on high" is their ally.

Authorized Version.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Is'ra-el, saying, ¹ Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syr'i-ans are come down.

10 And the king of Is'ra-el sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syr'i-a was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Is'ra-el?

12 And one of his servantssaid, ^b None,

Revised Version.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Is'ra-el, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither

10 the Syr'i-ans are coming down. And the king of Is'ra-el sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself

11 there, not once nor twice. And the heart of the king of Syr'i-a was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is

12 for the king of Is'ra-el? And one of

¹ Chap. 13. 14; Psa. 25. 14; Prov. 3. 22; Isa. 6. 13; Amos 3. 7; Matt. 5. 13.—^b No.

9. Ben-hadad served as a rod of chastisement to bring back the nation from its apostasy. Jehovah rescued it repeatedly; not by kings, mighty armies or great generals, but by the man of God, that all might perceive that salvation was not a work of human strength or wisdom, but was due to the God of Israel.—*Bähr*. Elisha appears in the distinct character of a seer, which was the older name for a prophet. 1 Sam. 9. 9. He saw the place where the Syrians had determined to encamp, not once only, but as often as they formed a plan, and, when they came to take him captive, he saw the heavenly protecting powers, and at his prayer the eyes of his attendant were opened, so that he too saw them, whereas the Syrians were struck with blindness. It was not clairvoyance, but revelation.—*Lange*. Beware that thou pass not—Avoid leading or sending your forces into such a place.—*Terry*. Are come down—"Are coming." They were lying in ambush ready to spring upon and capture any that came in their way. *Josephus* says the King of Israel was starting on a hunting party when Elisha warned him. In spite of the strong language used against Jehoram (8. 13, 14) and his family on account of their sins, God's prophet had still much hope of the nation, and, as we have seen in several instances, not without good reason. His action here saves not only the king, but the people also.—*Lumby*.

It is no treason to bring crafty and malicious plots to light, but a sacred duty.—*Oslander*. Tittle-tattle and double-dealing should never be indulged in, but no one can know beforehand of an intended wrong and neglect utmost efforts to prevent it without participating in its guilt.

The Lord is a hiding-place. Psa. 119. 114. He brings to naught the plots of the crafty, so that they cannot accomplish them. Job 5. 12; vers. 8-14. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psa. 34. 7; vers. 15-19.

10. Sent to the place—Sent spies there. Saved himself there—Not by sending armed forces to rout the ambushed Syrians, or to preoccupy the place before the Syrians came down to it, but by observing the counsel of the prophet, and not passing through that locality.—*Terry*. Not once nor twice—Repeatedly did he thus escape the snares set for him.

Our best safety is in the guidance and protection of God. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Christians should trust God as thoroughly as soldiers trust their general or ship-passengers their captain. Privates and passengers dare not advise their official guides and guardians; but how often we presume to advise God!

11. Sore troubled—Ben-hadad had cause for anxiety. Unprecedented military tactics were being used by his foes. His servants—His "aids," as above. Which of us is for the king of Israel—When his design was thus repeatedly frustrated it was natural to think of treachery among his own people.—*Cambridge Bible*. But he could hardly have done a more foolish thing than to thus blurt out his suspicions.

Worldly men attribute failure to wrong causes, and are unhappy. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It is one of the hardest practical lessons for a self-willed man to learn, that he is not omnipotent.

12. One of his servants said—How knew this servant that Elisha gave the information? From some Israelite this Syrian may have obtained his knowledge.—*Terry*. A heathen in a

Authorized Version.

my lord, O king: but E-li'sha, the prophet that *is* in Is-ra-el, telleth the king of Is-ra-el the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber.

18 And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in 'Do'than.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a ^ogreat host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the ^oservant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

Revised Version.

his servants said, Nay, my lord, O king: but E-li'sha, the prophet that is in Is-ra-el, telleth the king of Is-ra-el the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber. And he said, Go and see where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Do'than.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the

15 city about. And when the ^oservant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we

^o Gen. 37. 17.—^cHeavy.—^dOr, minister; Exod. 34. 13.

^o Or, minister.

foreign land confesses, in regard to Elisha, something which no one in Israel had yet admitted to be true. The same thing also happened when the Greatest of all prophets appeared. Matt. 8. 10; 13. 57.—*Bähr*. Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel—This mention of Elisha points to such a knowledge of him as might have been gained through Naaman's cure. It may, however, be that communications of other kinds passed between Syria and Israel, and that in some of these the precise nature of Elisha's conduct was described. Nothing in the story of Naaman could suggest that Elisha gave information to the king of Israel.—*Cambridge Bible*. In thy bed-chamber—A proverbial expression meaning the most secret and confidential plans and counsels of the king.—*Terry*.

Nothing can be hid from Omniscience. See ILLUSTRATIONS. God hears and sees our most carefully hidden words and actions. An awful thought to the sinner: a comfort to the Christian.

13. Go and spy where he is—This resolution was, of course, grounded on the belief that, however great the knowledge of Elisha might be, if seized and kept a prisoner, he could no longer give information to the king of Israel.—*Jamieson*. But how blind, to imagine that he who could tell his secret counsels could not also frustrate the movements of his spies!—*Whedon*. Dothan—A beautiful spot on an eminence still bearing the name Tell Dothan, about twelve miles north of Samaria, the same place to which Joseph went in search of his brethren. Gen. 37. 17.—*Terry*. See introductory note on PLACES. We can see from this history that the Syrians were able at this time to penetrate very far into the country of Israel.—*Cambridge Bible*.

14. A great host—Greatness is comparative. Here was a company such as could be led by Elisha to Samaria, and fed easily when they reached that city. But no doubt they were formidable when employed for the capture of a single man of peace like Elisha, and they had taken up their position by night.—*Lumby*. Compassed the city about—Beset all the gates, so that none could escape without their knowledge. Dothan was evidently unguarded.

Faith takes away all fear, and gives true and joyful courage; Psa. 23. 4; 91. 1-4; 2 Cor. 4. 8. David speaks with this faith, Psa. 3. 5, 6; 27. 1-3; and Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32. 7.

15. Servant of the man of God—Not Gehazi, but another chosen in his place; probably a young man taken from one of the schools of prophets.—*Terry*. A host compassed the city both with horses and chariots—The Revised Version says, "A host with horses and chariots was round about the city." The words are not the same in Hebrew as in the previous verse where "compassed" was used. The horses and chariots were in addition to the footmen, who alone were spoken of in verse 14. Alas, my master! The young man was evidently early astir. He made the discovery, and with quick wit knows why these Syrians have come; they are not mere marauders, and seem for once to have outwitted his prophetic master.

Our fidelity may get us into difficulties. Vers. 13, 14, 15. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Faithful was martyred in Vanity Fair. A perfidious world hates loyalty.

Authorized Version.

16 And he answered, Fear not: for ¹they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And E-li'sha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about E-li'sha.

18 And when they came down to him,

Revised Version.

16 do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than

17 they that be with them. And E-li'sha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about E-li'sha. And when they came down to

¹ 2 Sam. 22. 3, 21; 3 Chron. 22. 7; Ps. 2. 2-3; 16. 7; 27. 1-3; 34. 7, 8; 34. 27; 40. 4; 54. 10; 64. 10; 91. 3; Prov. 18. 10; 21. 21; 22. 25; Isa. 42. 1; Rom. 8. 31.—Chap. 2. 11; Ps. 34. 7; 68. 17; Zach. 1. 8; 6. 1-7; Heb. 1. 14.

16. They that be with us—Elisha speaks as a man whose eyes are opened, and who, in consequence, is sure of Jehovah's protection, whether he beholds the angelic host about him or not.—*Cambridge Bible*. He saw already the divine, protecting power, and begged God to allow his attendant also to see it, that he might undertake the journey back to Samaria with him, through the hostile army, fearless and consoled.—*Lange*. Dr. Terry maintains stoutly the real existence of this host of angelic warriors—an "army of heaven."

Faith sees victory and is confident. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Elisha had as much reason to worry and fear as you have. But he was, and you are, God's servant, and therefore cannot be defeated.

II. ELISHA'S DEFENDERS. Verses 16-18.

17. Open his eyes—To the servant there was need of a more manifest vision, and for this Elisha prays, and God vouchsafes to grant it, that the servant may become as confident as his master. It is not that the troops may be gathered that Elisha prays; they are there already; but that the servant may have a seeing eye bestowed upon him to discern how well he and his master are protected.—*Bähr*. The Lord opened the eyes of the young man—His natural eyes saw only the horses and chariots of Syria, and he could not understand Elisha's meaning when he said, They that be with us are more than they that be with them. He stood in blank bewilderment, terrified at sight of the enemy's host, and not knowing what to make of his master's words. In answer to Elisha's prayer God opened his spiritual eyes, unveiled his inner sense, and lifted him for a moment to the high plane of Elisha's supernatural vision, whence he obtained a view of the mighty creations of the spiritual world around him. This sight into the spiritual world was not an instance of hallucination, but a miracle of grace; an instance of that divine ecstasy or trance in which the holy seers were enabled to behold the visions of the supersensual world, and which consists essentially in this, that the human spirit is seized and compassed by the divine spirit with such force and energy that, being lifted from its natural state, it becomes altogether a seeing eye, a hearing ear, a perceiving sense, that takes most vivid cognizance of things in either heaven, earth, or hell.—*Terry*. The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire—These horses and chariots were there before the young man's eyes were opened to behold them; and so we may well believe that millions of spiritual beings walk unseen around us, and perhaps minister to us in a thousand ways when we are unconscious of their presence. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him."—*Terry*. Bound about Elisha—The enemy compassed the town all round but there was an inner circle filled by God's army. Dothan stood on an eminence, and so the summit could thus be encircled, and the barrier against the Syrians appear complete.—*Cambridge Bible*. The Syrian army surrounded the hill at its base, so that escape seemed impossible; the heavenly army, however, surrounded the city at the top of the hill, and so stood opposed to the Syrians.—*Bähr*.

Our real strength lies in prayer. Vers. 17, 18. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

We have unseen allies. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

18. And when they came down to him—As the words stand, "they" must refer to the Syrian troops, and to understand the sentence we must suppose that Elisha and his servant,

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
E-li'sha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of E-li'sha.	him, E-li'sha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this 'people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of E-li'sha.
^a Gen. 19. 11; Job 5. 14; Acts 13. 9.	^b Heb. nation.

the latter encouraged by the heavenly vision, had come forth from the city and been able to pass the gate. After this the Syrians followed them, and on their approach Elisha prayed that they might be smitten with blindness.—*Cambridge Bible*. Let us suppose that, as a matter of historical fact, on a certain day, a certain man, under certain circumstances, looked up and saw in the air "chariots and horses of fire," or something else for which "chariots and horses of fire" is a symbolic expression. The practical religious importance of the incident lies in the fact that he was thereby convinced that God protects his own. The prophet's object in his prayer could be none other than that he might be thus confirmed in the faith, and the edification of the story depends upon these two deductions: God protects his servants; and to the eye of faith, this protection is evident, when earthly eyes see it not.—*Sumner*. **Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness**—What seems to have been sent upon the men was an illusion which prevented them from seeing correctly what was before them. *Josephus* explains it as a mist whereby they were prevented from recognizing Elisha. The word, which is plural in form, occurs only here and in Gen. 19. 11. It denotes the seeing of something unreal instead of the true image. Thus these men could go with Elisha to Samaria, not knowing to what place he was leading them.—*Cambridge Bible*. They evidently did not know they were blinded. It seems to have been mental confusion. **Smote them with blindness**—The same divine power which, in answer to prayer, opened the spiritual eyes of the young man, closed and blinded even the natural eyes of the enemies of Elisha. Jehovah blesses his servants with enlarged vision of his power and glory, but curses his enemies with blindness. Comp. Gen. 19. 11; Acts 13. 11.—*Terry*. Not for his own sake did Elisha pray Jehovah to smite the Syrians with blindness, but in order that he might lead them to Samaria. The thanks for their surrender into the hands of the king were due, not to him, but to Jehovah. Jehoram was to learn once more to recognize the faithfulness and might of Jehovah, and to be convinced that there was a prophet in Israel (chap. 5. 8) from the fact that these dangerous enemies were delivered into his hands without a blow. On the other hand, Ben-hadad and the Syrians were to learn that they could not accomplish any thing, with all their cunning plots, against the "prophet that is in Israel" (ver. 12), and much less against Him whose servant and witness this prophet was. From this time on, therefore, they ceased their raids, as is expressly stated in verse 23. The release, entertainment, and dismissal of the troops was a deep mortification to them. The slaughter of the captives which Jehoram desired would, on the contrary, have frustrated the purpose of the prophet's act.—*Bähr*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Worldly men put confidence in human stratagem. Ver. 8.—When Napoleon was about to invade Russia, a person who had endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, finding he could not prevail, quoted the proverb, "Man proposes, but God disposes;" to which he indignantly replied, "I dispose as well as propose." A lady on hearing the boast remarked, "I set that down as the turning-point of the emperor's fortunes." The invasion of Russia proved the commencement of his fall.—*Whitecross*.

In Chili, where the ground is subject to frequent shocks of earthquake, men do not dig deep foundations, pile up high walls, or build as if for ages. Enduring structures cannot be erected on a treacherous soil. No more can worldly schemes with only human skill behind them permanently succeed.—*Spurgeon*.

Our best safety is in the guidance and protection of God. Ver. 10.—I was once climbing a high peak of the Monte Rosa chain with my brother. Near the top we entered a dense fog. My brother seeing a slope beyond, and not knowing it was the cornice overhanging a vast precipice, rushed forward. The guides raised a cry of agonized warning which caused him

to halt. As he did so the snow gave way and he began to sink. A guide reached him in time to seize him by the coat. He was rescued. A step without the guide may be at infinite peril.—*Newman Hall*.

When Felix of Nola was hotly pursued by murderers, he took refuge in a cave, and instantly over the rift of it the spiders wove their webs, and seeing this the murderers passed by. Then said the saint, "Where God is not, a wall is but a spider's thread; where he is, a spider's web is as a wall."—*Farrar*.

Worldly men attribute failure to wrong causes, and are unhappy. Ver. 11. Fuseli when he failed in any of his caricatures used to complain that nature put him out; and the housemaid when scolded for the untidiness of the rooms exclaimed: "They would be clean enough if it were not for the nasty sun which is always showing the dirty corners."—*H. Smith*.

Nothing can be hid from Omniscience. Ver. 12.—A Greek sculptor worked out that part of the statue which would be hidden by the wall of the temple as faithfully as that which would be exposed to the eye, because the gods would look on both.—*F. D. Maurice*.

A father said to his son, who had attended a Sabbath-school, "Carry this parcel to such a place." "It is the Sabbath," replied the boy. "Put it in your pocket," replied the father. "God can see into my pocket," said the child.

One day the astronomer Mitchell was viewing the sun as it was setting. Its rays came over the top of a hill seven miles away. Through the great eye of his telescope he saw two boys stealing apples from a tree on that hill. One was getting the apples and the other watching, feeling certain that they were undiscovered. But the professor saw every movement distinctly.

God enters by a private door into every individual.—*Emerson*.

Our fidelity may get us into difficulties. Vers. 13, 14, 15.—Oliver Millard, a popular preacher of the reign of Louis XI., attacked the vices of the court in his sermons and did not spare the king himself, who, taking offense, sent him word that if he did not change his tone he would have him thrown into the Seine. "Tell the king," replied Oliver, "I shall reach paradise sooner by water than he will with his post-horses." [Traveling post was instituted by Louis XI.]

A young workman in the "Black country," after his conversion, sought to influence his companions for good. They persecuted him in return. One day when he was in the forge they stripped him naked and placed him in front of one of the furnace fires while they uttered terrible blasphemies and threats. They purposed to keep him there till he swore, but through a friend he was released. "I never felt Jesus so near to me," he said.

The pope sent a Dominican bishop to Florence to answer Savonarola's sermons. "He reported thus: 'This monk says we ought not to keep concubines, commit simony, or be guilty of licentiousness. What shall I reply?' 'Reward him!' wrote the pope. 'Give him a red hat; make a cardinal and friend of him at once!' For three days the bishop plied his arguments, then offered his tempting bribes. 'Come to my sermon to-morrow," said the monk, "and you shall hear my reply." He wound up a powerful denunciation with the words, 'I will have no other red hat than that of martyrdom, colored with my own blood.'—*Newman Hall*.

Faith sees victory, and is confident. Ver. 16.—The bird often perches on a frail branch that bends and yields beneath its weight or is swayed by the slightest breeze. It has no fear though the outward and material support give way, for it has wings—those supports in itself which God has given. So faith renders us independent of props and buoys the soul up though all earthly aids be withdrawn.

Give me these links: First, sense of need; second, desire to get; third, belief that God has in store; fourth, belief that though he withdraws for a while he loves to be asked; and, fifth, belief that asking will obtain; and the chain will reach from earth to heaven, bringing heaven down to me or bearing me up into heaven.—*Guthrie*.

Dr. Brown tells of an old Scottish believer who, when questioned regarding the ground of her confidence, thus grandly responded: "Janet," said the minister, "what if, after all God has done for you, he should let you drop into hell?" "E'en's [even as] he likes," she replied; "if he does he'll lose mair than I'll do."

Cæsar never misled his army as to the enemy's strength. In Africa, before Thapsus, his officers were nervous at the approach of Juba, he called them together, and said: "Within a day

King Juba will be here with thirty thousand horsemen, ten thousand skirmishers, and three hundred elephants. You are not to think or ask questions. I tell you the truth, and if any of you are alarmed I shall send you home."—*Froude*.

We have unseen allies. Ver. 17.—The English ambassador to the court of Prussia sat at a table of Frederick the Great, then meditating a war depending mainly on English subsidies. Round the table sat infidel French wits making merry over the decay of the follies of ancient faith. When the talk turned to war, the ambassador said: "England would, by the help of God, stand by Prussia. "Ah," said the infidel Frederick, "I did not know you had an ally of that name." "Please your majesty," was the retort, "he is the only ally to whom we do not send subsidies."

God has opened our eyes to recognize the invisible forces of nature—gravitation, wind, electricity, etc.—and give us dominion over them so that they do our bidding.

Our real strength lies in prayer. Vers. 17, 18.—Just as a shoemaker makes a shoe and a tailor a coat, so the Christian's trade is praying. In our days it has raised three persons from the point of death: myself, my wife Catherine, and Melancthon.—*Luther*.

Sometimes a fog will settle over a vessel's deck and yet leave the topmast clear. Then a sailor goes aloft and gets a lookout the helmsman on deck cannot get. So prayer lifts us above the clouds and gives us a chance to see which way to steer.—*Spurgeon*.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **Draw a map** showing the relations of Syria and Israel, and on it indicate Damascus, the capital of Syria, and Samaria, the capital of Israel. In teaching children, draw a line from Damascus to Israel, to represent the march of the Syrians. It would be well to represent several places by marks on the Israelite frontier; and to draw lines of armies marching toward them, from Samaria to defend, and from Damascus to attack. With these tell the story of the lesson from verse 8 to verse 12.

2. **Indicate on the map** the situation on Dothan, and mention the selling of Joseph, which took place there. Draw a ring around it to represent the besieging camp of the Syrians. Tell the story of Elisha's servant, and what he saw. Ver. 18-15. Then draw inside the ring another, of bright red or yellow color, to represent the chariots and horses around Elisha. Vers. 16, 17.

3. **Relate the sequel** of the lesson, showing how the Syrians were led by Elisha to Samaria, and were returned home to Damascus. Show in this the power of kindness to overcome enemies.

4. **A line of spiritual teaching** in this lesson is to illustrate from it the ways in which God takes care of his own: 1.) By giving them knowledge. 2.) By giving them protection. 3.) By giving them answer to prayer. 4.) By giving them power over men. Does not God help his people in all these ways now?

5. **Another plan of teaching** may be found in the conduct of Elisha, and the spirit which he showed. Notice: 1.) His *patriotism*; in using his powers for the protection of his people, because, though fallen, they were still the people of God. 2.) His *insight*; for, living in close communion with God, the secret of the Lord was revealed to him. 3.) His *confidence*; he was strong in heart, trusting not in himself but in God. 4.) His *leadership*; prompt in action, he came forward, and led his enemies into the city of Samaria. 5.) We might notice, also, from the succeeding verses, his *mercy*, a trait that was far more strongly marked in Elisha than in Elijah.

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LESSON XIII.—March 29.

TEMPERANCE LESSON.—ISA. 5. 11-23.

GOLDEN TEXT.—My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.—Hos. 4. 6.

TIME.—About 760 B. C.

PLACE.—Probably Jerusalem.

RULERS.—Asariah, King of Judah; Pekah, King of Israel.

INTRODUCTION.

The wild grapes which Isaiah saw in the vineyard of the Lord he catalogues in a series of woes (vers. 8-24), fruits all of them of love of money and love of wine. They are abuse of the soil (8-10, 17), a giddy luxury which has taken to drink (11-16), a moral blindness and headlong audacity of sin which habitual avarice and drunkenness soon develop (18-21), and, again, a greed of drink and money—men's perversion of their strength to wine, and of their opportunities of justice to the taking of bribes (22-24). These are the features of corrupt civilization not only in Judah, and the voice that deploras them cannot speak without rousing others very clamant to the modern conscience. It is with remarkable persistence that in every civilization the two main passions of the human heart, love of wealth and love of pleasure, the instinct to gather and the instinct to squander, have sought precisely these two forms denounced by Isaiah in which to work their social havoc—appropriation of the soil and indulgence in strong drink. Every civilized community develops sooner or later its land question and its liquor question.—*G. A. Smith.*

Authorized Version.

11 Woe 'unto them that rise up early in the morning, *that* they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, *till* wine 'inflammeth them!

12 And 'the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their

Revised Version.

11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the

12 night, till wine inflame them! And the harp and the lute, the tabret and

¹ Prov. 22. 22, 26; Eccl. 10. 16.—^a Or, pursue them.—² Amos 6. 5, 6.

I. THE DRUNKARD'S FEAST. Verses 11, 12.

11. **Woe**—We are so accustomed to regard God's "woes" as threats and anathemas, we are apt to forget that they are also statements of the steady working of what is often called "natural" law. He who does the misdeeds here mentioned always has woe. **Early**—When it was regarded especially shameful to drink. Acts 2. 15; 1 Thess. 5. 7. Banquets for revelry began earlier than usual. Eccl. 10. 16, 17.—*Jamieson.* **Follow strong drink**—Implying intoxication. **Till wine inflame them**—With fatal persistence the luxury of every civilization has taken to drink; and of all the indictments brought by moralists against nations, that which they reserve for drunkenness is, as here, the most heavily weighted. The crusade against drink is not the novel thing that many imagine who observe only its late revival among ourselves. In ancient times there was scarcely a State in which prohibitive legislation of the most stringent kind was not attempted, and generally carried out with a thoroughness more possible under despots than where, as with us, the slow consent of public opinion is necessary. A horror of strong drink has in every age possessed those who from their position—as magistrates or prophets have been able to follow for any distance the drifts of social life. Isaiah exposes as powerfully as ever any of them did where the peculiar fatality of drinking lies.—*Expositor's Bible.*

12. **Harp**—Music was common at ancient feasts. Chap. 24. 8, 9; Amos 6. 5, 6. The harp is one of the most ancient of instruments. **Viol**—An instrument with twelve strings. **Tabret**—A kettle-drum or tambourine. From the use of the tabret in drowning the cries of children sacrificed to Moloch *Tophet* received its name. **Pipe**—Flute, or flageolet; from a Hebrew

Authorized Version.
feasts: but they ¹regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

13 Therefore ²'my people are gone into captivity, ³'because *they have* no knowledge: and ⁴'their honorable men *are* famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their

Revised Version.
the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither have they considered the operation of his hands. Therefore my people are gone into captivity, for lack of knowledge: and ¹'their honorable men are famished, and their multitude are parched with thirst. Therefore ²'hell hath enlarged her desire, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and

¹ Hos. 4. 11.—² Hos. 4. 6.—³ Luke 19. 44.—⁴ Their glory are men of families.

¹ Heb. their glory are men of families.—² Or, the grass; Heb. School; see Gen. 37. 35.

root, meaning probably to dance. Comp. Job 21. 11-15. **Regard not . . . the Lord**—A frequent effect of feasting. Job 1. 5; Psa. 28. 5. **Work . . . operation**—In punishing the guilty. Ver. 19; chap. 10. 12.—*Jamieson*. No one who has had to do with persons slowly falling from moderate to immoderate drinking can mistake Isaiah's meaning here. Nothing kills the conscience like the steady drinking of intoxicants; and religion, even while the conscience is alive, acts on it only as an opiate. It is not, however, with the symptoms of drink in individuals so much as with its aggregate effects on the nation that Isaiah is concerned. So prevalent is excessive drinking, so entwined with the social customs of the country and many powerful interests, that it is extremely difficult to rouse public opinion to its effects.—*Expositor's Bible*.

II. THE DRUNKARD'S WOE. Verses 13-21.

13. **Are gone**—The prophet sees the future as if it were before his eyes. **No knowledge**—Because of their foolish recklessness. Ver. 12; chap. 1. 8; Hos. 4. 6; Luke 19. 44. **Famished**—In awful contrast to their luxurious feasts. Vers. 11, 12. **Honorable men**—Aristocrats. **Multitude**—Plebeians, in contradistinction to the "honorable men" or nobles. **Thirst**—Psa. 107. 4, 5. Contrast with their drinking. Ver. 11. In their deportation and exile they shall hunger and thirst. Thus *Jamieson* and other authorities understand this passage. But it may be understood as a highly poetical description of the lengths to which their thirst for intoxicants had led them. So the *Expositor's Bible*: Temperance reformers are often blamed for strength of their language, but they may shelter themselves behind Isaiah. As he pictures it the national destruction caused by drink is complete. It is nothing less than the people's *captivity*, and we know what that meant to an Israelite. Their captors are wine and strong drink. There is no such thing as satisfying their inflamed appetite. "Their honorable men are famished, and their multitude perished with thirst." It affects all classes alike.

14. **Therefore hell hath enlarged herself** [her desire] and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth [among them], shall descend into it—The want and ruin of this earth are not enough to describe this "woe." The very appetite of hell has to be enlarged for the consumption of the spoils of strong drink. Does it not truly seem as if the wild and wanton waste of drink were preventable? as if it were not, as many are ready to sneer, the inevitable evil of men's hearts choosing this form of issue, but a superfluous audacity of sin, which the devil himself did not desire or tempt men to? It is this feeling of the infernal gratuitousness of most of the drink-evil—the conviction that here hell would be quiet if only she were not stirred up by the extraordinarily wanton provocatives that society and the State offer to excessive drinking—which compels temperance reformers at the present day to isolate drunkenness and make it the object of a special crusade. Isaiah's strong figure has lost none of its strength to-day. When our judges tell us from the bench that nine tenths of pauperism and crime are caused by drink, and our physicians that if only irregular tipping were abolished half the current sickness of the land would cease, and our statesmen that the ravages of strong drink are equal to those of the historical scourges of war, famine, and pestilence combined, surely to swallow such a glut of spoil "the appetite of hell" must have been still more enlarged, and "the mouth of hell" made yet wider.—*G. A. Smith*. **Hell**—Means here the unseen world of spirits, not the place of torment. Poetically it is represented as enlarging itself

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.	their multitude, and their 'pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them, descend <i>into it</i> . And the mean man
15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled:	is bowed down, and the great man is humbled, and the eyes of the lofty
16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and 'God <i>that is</i> holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.	16 are humbled: But the LORD of hosts is exalted in judgment, and God the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness.
17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.	17 Then shall the lambs feed as in their pasture, and the waste places of the fat ones shall 'wanderers eat.
18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope:	18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it
19 That 'say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Is'ra-el draw nigh and come, that we may know it!	19 were with a cart-rope; that say, Let him make speed, let him hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Is'ra-el draw nigh and come, that we may know of it!
20 Woe unto them ^d that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for	20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for

^c The God the holy, or, the holy God.—^d Chap. 56. 2; Jer. 17. 8; Amos 4. 18; 5 Pet. 2. 1.—^d That say concerning evil, it is good, etc.

^d Or, humbly.—^d Or, strangers.

immensely in order to receive the countless hosts of perishing Jews. Num. 16. 30. **He that rejoiceth** means the drunken reveler in Jerusalem.—*Jamieson*.

15. Comp. chap. 2. 9, 11, 17. All ranks, mean and mighty alike, are humbled. Compare the "honorable" and the "multitude" of verse 18.

16. God shall be exalted in man's view because of the manifestations of his justice in punishing the guilty, and sanctified—regarded as holy—because of his "righteous" dealings.

17. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner—At will, as in their own pasture. The lambs of the Arab shepherds shall roam at large, Judea being desolated of its inhabitants, and turned into one vast pasturage. Waste places—The deserted lands of the rich, the fat ones—See Psa. 22. 29, then gone into captivity. Strangers, that is, nomadic tribes, shall make their flocks to feed there.—*Jamieson*.

18. The next three woes are upon different aggravations of that moral perversity which the prophet has already traced to strong drink. In the first of these it is better to read "draw punishment near with cords of vanity," than draw iniquity. Then we have a striking antithesis—the drunkards mocking Isaiah over their cups, with the challenge, if it would not be taken up: "Let Jehovah make speed, and hasten his work of judgment, that we may see it," while all the time they themselves were dragging that judgment near, as it were with a cart-rope, by their persistent diligence in evil. This figure of sinners jeering at the approach of a calamity while they actually wear the harness of its carriage is very striking. But the Jews are not only unconscious of judgment, they are confused as to the very principles of morality: "Who call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"—*Smith*. "An evil inclination is at first like a fine hair-string, but the finishing like a cart-rope." The antithesis is between the cords of sophistry, like the spider's web (chap. 59. 5; Job 8. 14), with which one sin draws on another, until they at last bind themselves with great guilt, as with a cart-rope. They strain every nerve in sin. Vanity—Wickedness. Sin—A substantive, not a verb; that is, they draw on themselves "sin" and its penalty recklessly.—*Bible Commentary*.

19. Work—Vengeance. Ver. 12. Language of defiance to God. So Lamech's boast of impunity. Gen. 4. 23, 24; comp. Jer. 17. 15. 2 Pet. 3. 8, 4. Counsel—God's threatened purpose to punish.

20. A fourth woe against those who confound the distinctions of right and wrong (comp. Rom.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!	light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!
21 Woe unto <i>them that are</i> wise in their own eyes and prudent <i>in their own sight!</i>	21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!
22 Woe unto <i>them that are</i> mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:	22 Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to
23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!	23 mingle strong drink: which justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!
e Before their faces; Rom. 1. 22; 12. 16.	

1. 28). Bitter . . . sweet—Sin is bitter (Jer. 2. 19; 4. 18; Acts 8. 28; Rom. 8. 14; Heb. 12. 15); though it seems sweet for a time. Prov. 9. 17, 18. Religion is sweet. Psa. 119. 103.—*Jamieson*.

21. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight—In his fifth woe the prophet attacks a disposition to which his scorn gives no peace throughout his ministry. If these sensualists had only confined themselves to their sensuality they might have been left alone; but with that intellectual bravado which is equally born with "Dutch courage" of drink, they interfered in the conduct of the State, and prepared arrogant policies of alliance and war that were the distress of the sober-minded prophet all his days.—*Expositor's Bible*.

22, 23. In his last woe Isaiah returns to the drinking habits of the upper classes, from which it would appear that among the judges, even of Judah, there were "six-bottle men." They sustained their extravagance by unscrupulous subsidies. They justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him. The two verses are closely joined. Mingle strong drink not with water, but spices, to make it intoxicating. Prov. 9. 2, 5; Sol. Song 8. 2. Take away . . . righteousness—Set aside the just claims of those having a righteous case.—*Bible Commentary*.

TEACHING HINTS.

There are five "woes" in this lesson, and they suggest an order and outline of teaching.

1. The woe of the drunkard. Vers. 11, 12. Find in these verses a graphic picture of a drunken debauch, and notice how utterly those who engage in it ignore God and God's will.

2. The woe of the presumptuous. Vers. 18, 19. Those who receive this warning are represented not as drawn by sin (Jas. 1. 14), but as drawing sin to themselves; people who seek out opportunities of guilty pleasure, who try to find new forms of wickedness, and who stimulate their jaded appetites and lusts by temptation.

3. The woe of the falsifier. Ver. 20. How many there are who try to show that *their* sin is excusable, and even meritorious; who tone down the distinction between good and evil, or obliterate it; who would even show that darkness is light, and the liquor traffic is a positive benefit to the community.

4. The woe of the haughty. Ver. 21. This warning seems to aim at the intellectual self-conceit, the lofty opinion of human wisdom without the recognition of God, which is the trait of the agnosticism of to-day.

5. The woe of the wicked. Vers. 22, 23. Not every sort of wickedness is here condemned, but especially that which boasts in its godlessness. Those who would show their greatness by their guilt, that trait which fairly glories in its shame. As says Dr. Alexander: "There may be a particular allusion to a species of foolhardiness and brutal ambition not uncommon in our own times, leading men to show the vigor of their frames by mad excess, and to seek eminence in this way no less eagerly than superior spirits seek true glory."

For ILLUSTRATIONS ON TEMPERANCE see Appendix.

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JERUSALEM

(from the Ordnance Survey)

Scale English Yards
0 100 200 400 600 800 1000

Heights in English feet above the Mediterranean.

The map depicts the city of Jerusalem with its surrounding hills and valleys. Key features include the Temple Mount, the Old City walls, and various landmarks such as the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The map is labeled with various geographical features and historical sites, including the Tiber, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea. The map also shows the city's expansion over time, with labels for different periods of occupation.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.*

LESSON I.—April 5.

SAVED FROM FAMINE.—2 KINGS 7. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men 1—Psa. 107. 8.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—892 B. C.

PLACE.—The city of Samaria and the surrounding country.

PERSONS.—1. King Jehoram of Israel seems to have been vacillating in character, but with some strong traits and good impulses—"a true son of his father Ahab." 2. Elisha. 3. A lord, concerning whom we have no facts except those here given, and his death recorded in verse 17. 4. Four lepers.

Authorized Version.

1 Then E-li'sha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, 'To-morrow, about this time, *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Sa-ma'ri-a.

¹ Psa. 44. 1.

Revised Version.

1 And E-li'sha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD: thus saith the LORD, To-morrow about this time shall a 'measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Sa-ma'ri-a.

¹ Heb. *seah*.

I. THE LORD'S PROMISE. Verse 1.



1. Hear ye the word of the Lord—The solemnity and distinctness with which the prophet addresses the king, the elders, and the others who are present must not be overlooked. To-morrow at this time—When the need is greatest God is nearest. If God often unexpectedly helps even apostates out of great need, how much more will he do this for his own, who call to him day and night. He has roads for every journey; he does not lack for means.—*Bähr*. A measure of fine flour for a shekel—This may be estimated at a peck of fine flour sold for fifty-seven cents, and two pecks of barley at the same price.—*Terry*. The "measure" is the Hebrew *seah*, which is said to be about a peck. It was six times as much as the *kab* mentioned in 6. 25. So that the change which Elisha foretells would provide six times as much good food for one fifth of the price for which in the famine the vilest had been sold.—*Cambridge Bible*. In the gate of Samaria—That is, the place where the market was usually held.—*Lange*. Vegetables, cattle, and all sorts of country produce are still sold every morning at the gates of towns in the East.—*Jamieson*.

* FOR GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDIES OF THE FIRST SIX MONTHS, see pages 17, 18.

Authorized Version.

2 Then ^aa lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, ^bif the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but ^cshalt not eat thereof.

8 And there were four leprous men ^dat the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine ^eis in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syr'i-ans: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if ^fthey kill us, we shall but die.

Revised Version.

2 Then the captain on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

8 Now there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here

4 until we die? If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syr'i-ans: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if

^a A lord which belonged to the king leaning up a his hand; chap. 5. 18.—^b Gen. 7. 11; 8. 2; Mal. 2. 10.—^c Heb. 2. 17.—^d Lev. 13. 46; Num. 5. 2; chap. 5. 27; Luke 17. 12.—^e Esth. 4. 16.

Our chastisements are proportioned to our need. See ILLUSTRATIONS. "E'en crosses from His sovereign hand are blessings in disguise."

2. A lord—Rather, *third man*, or "captain." This was the title of one of the highest officers of state, and one of the nearest attendants upon royalty. He was to the king of Israel what Naaman was to the king of Syria—prime minister.—*Terry*. Windows in heaven may be an allusion to Gen. 7. 11. The scoff and jest of unbelief.—*Lange*. The prime minister looks upon the thing foretold as a sheer impossibility, and treats the prophet's words with contemptuous scorn. Only think, he says, of Jehovah opening the heavens and showering down meal and grain. Can such a thing be?—*Terry*. The children of this world consider their unbelief to be wisdom and enlightenment, and they seek to put that which is a consolation and an object of reverence to others in a ridiculous light. The Lord will not leave such wickedness unpunished.—*Lange*. Thou shalt see it with thine eyes—The answer to this mocking captain would be as hard for him to comprehend as was the promise of abundance which he was deriding.—*Cambridge Bible*.

It is easy for our Lord to bring days of plenty close upon days of famine and want. Therefore we should not despair, but trust in God, and await his blessing in hope and patience until he "open the windows of heaven." Mal. 3. 10.

Blind unbelief is sure to err. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Opposition to God's purpose only injures ourselves. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

II. THE DESERTED CAMP. Verses 3-11.

3. Four leprous men—Comp. Lev. 13. 46; Num. 5. 2, *sq.* No one any longer brought them food from the city, and they were not permitted to enter it. In order to escape death from hunger they proposed to go over to the camp of the enemy at dusk, when they would not be seen from the city.—*Bähr*. Hebrew tradition says that these lepers were Gehazi and his three sons.—*Clarke*. At the entering in of the gate—Living, perhaps, in some leazar-house there. Lev. 13. 4-6; Num. 5. 8.—*Jamieson*.

Self-effort is a step toward salvation. See ILLUSTRATIONS. We must "see from the wrath to come" if we would be saved.

4. Let us fall unto the host of the Syrians—These wrecks of humanity use the language which would be used by hale men who were deserting one side for another. Comp. 1 Sam. 29. 3; 2 Kings 25. 11. The expression "fall away" for "desert" is common in English also. Comp. *Shakespeare*, "Antony and Cleopatra," iv, 6, 17.—*Lumby*. To stay meant prolonged starvation and eventual death; to go meant a mere chance of hospitable nourishment, but a probability of sudden death.

Authorized Version.

5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syr'i-ans: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syr'i-a, behold, *there was no man there.*

6 For the LORD had made the host of the Syr'i-ans 'to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Is-ra-el hath hired against

Revised Version.

5 they kill us, we shall but die. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syr'i-ans: and when they were come to the outermost part of the camp of the Syr'i-ans, behold, there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syr'i-ans to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Is-ra-el hath hired against us the kings of the

* Lev. 24. 24; 2 Sam. 5. 24; chap. 19. 7; Job 14. 21.

What language is this: "If they kill us, we shall only die," as if the grave was the end of men, and the great beyond were only a dream; or as if it were a matter of course that the pain of death atones for the sins of a wasted life, and must rightfully purchase their pardon, and a reception into heavenly blessedness. Our life lies in the hand of God, who sets its limit, which we may not anticipate. Circumstances may, indeed, arise in which a man wishes for death; it makes a great difference, however, whether this wish comes from weariness of life, or whether we say, with St. Paul: "I long to depart and be with Christ." Only when Christ has become our life is death a gain.—*Lange.*

Extremities make men brave. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

5. They rose up in the twilight—The evening twilight. Ver. 12.—*Jamieson.* An awful walk these four wretches took in the gathering darkness. They left death by hunger behind them, to drag leprous death with them, toward probable death by the sword in the Syrian camp. The uttermost part of the camp—That is, the extremity nearest the city.—*Jamieson.* "Uttermost" has lost that sense now, and might be taken to signify the "farthest portion."—*Lumby.*

Fuller knowledge often dispels our fears. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

6. The Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots—This illusion of the sense of hearing, whereby the besiegers imagined the tramp of two armies from opposite quarters, was a great miracle which God wrought directly for the deliverance of his people. Hath hired—Instances of mercenary service are found elsewhere in the Bible narrative. Thus (2 Sam. 10. 6) "the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, etc," and Amaziah, King of Judah, hired valiant men out of Israel. 2 Chron. 25. 6. The kings of the Hittites—In profane literature this people, evidently very wide-extended and powerful, are unmentioned, and it is only the modern deciphering of the records of Egypt and Babylon which has given us a conception of the Hittite power. Thence we learn that from very early times they were in conflict with Egypt, and that one of their chief towns, Kadesh on the river Orontes, was the scene of several contests between the Hittites and the Egyptians. Their other chief city is found to have been Carchemish on the Euphrates, so that the description of their territory in Josh. 1. 4 is seen to be literally correct, and we can understand how the hiring of such a mighty enemy would be sure to alarm Ben-hadad.—*Cambridge Bible.* They are found registered among the Syrian enemies of the Egyptians in the monuments of the nineteenth dynasty, and appear at that time to have inhabited the valley of the upper Orontes. In the early Assyrian monuments they appear as the most powerful people of northern Syria, and were especially strong in chariots.—*Rawlinson.* The civilization of the Hittites and their military strength were great. According to *Gladstone* they fought at the siege of Troy. *Professor Sayce* believes that the excavation of the site of Carchemish will disclose a second Nineveh to the modern world. In the height of their power all Asia Minor was under their sway. Their kings were probably the first coiners of money. They were a literary people, established public libraries, and preserved public records. In some of the ancient pictures they wear "pig-tails," and their appearance is amusingly similar to that of the modern Chinese. They eventually fell before the rising power of the Assyrian empire.—*Fradenburgh.* This passage has been often attacked by sceptics; and even reverential scholars, before the most recent discoveries had been made, mistakenly conceded that it was "unhistorical," and that there were no kings of the Hittites at this

Authorized Version.

us ' the kings of the Hit'tites, and the kings of the E-gyp'tians, to come upon us.

7 Wherefore they 'arose, and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life.

8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it*; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*.

9 Then they said one to another, We 'do not well: this day *is* a day of 'good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, 'some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syr'i-ans, and, behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*.

Revised Version.

Hit'tites, and the kings of the E-gyp'tians, to come upon us.

7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life. And when these lepers came to the outermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and they came back, and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it.

9 Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, 'punishment will overtake us: now therefore come, let us go and tell

10 the king's household. So they came and called unto the 'porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syr'i-ans, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but the horses tied, and the asses tied, and the tents

¹ 1 Kings 10. 25.—² Psal. 46. 4, 5, 6: 52. 5; Prov. 26. 1.—³ Phil. 2. 14.—⁴ Eccl. 9. 11.—⁵ We shall find punishment; Num. 32. 22.

⁶ Or, our iniquity will find us out.—⁷ Or porters.

time. But here is an illustration of the thought commented upon under the fifth verse, that "fuller knowledge often dispels our fears." That which leads to doubt of the Scripture narrative with fuller knowledge becomes the strongest buttress and support of its accuracy. The kings of the Egyptians—Large districts of Egypt, called by Greeks *nomes*, were under distinct organization, though owing allegiance to the Pharaoh. It is very probable that at various period there were two if not three kingdoms in the land. Hence the Assyrians speak of the *kings* that had been hired out of Egypt. If this had been the case then Ben-hadad and his army would have been shut in both on the north and on the south. We need not wonder at the terror such a thought inspired. But the plural "kings" may here be used vaguely, as "princes" of Babylon is in 2 Chron. 32. 31, when only Berodach-baladan is in question.—*Lumby*.

Guilty men are easily alarmed. SEE ILLUSTRATIONS. It is only necessary that in the darkness a wind should blow, or that water should splash in free course, or that an echo should resound from the mountains, or that the wind should rustle the dry leaves, to terrify the godless, so that they flee as if pursued by a sword, and fall, though no one pursues them.

9. We do not well—They were justly anxious lest they might be punished if they should longer conceal the joyful intelligence from the king and the city.—*Lange*. The king's household.—The men themselves go no further than the gate, but the wardens on the wall would carry the news, as soon as they received it, to the royal palace. The king's distress at the sufferings of the besieged citizens would be known to every one.—*Cambridge Bible*.

10, 11. A graphic picture is here presented. These lepers describe the cattle as the first objects they saw, for in Oriental encampments cattle are picketed all about the tents. The beasts stood tethered in their places, the panic-stricken soldiers having not dared to take time to unloose them. When the lepers returned to the city gate, the porter, probably a soldier on guard, could not leave his post; so he calls to other soldiers within, and they tell the palace sentries. The

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.	11 as they were. And ⁴ he called the porters; and they told it to the king's household within.
12 And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syr'i-ans have done to us. They know that we <i>be</i> hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.	12 And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syr'i-ans have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall take them alive, and get into the city.
13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let <i>some</i> take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left ⁵ in the city, (behold, they <i>are</i> as all the multitude of Is'ra-el that are left in it: behold, <i>I say</i> , they <i>are</i> even as all the multitude of the Is'ra-el-ites that are consumed :) and let us send and see.	13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left ⁵ in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Is'ra-el that are left in it; behold, they are as all the multitude of Is'ra-el that are consumed :) and let us send and see.
14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syr'i-ans, saying, Go and see.	14 They took therefore two chariots with horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syr'i-ans, saying, Go and
cin it.	⁴ Or, the porters called.— ⁵ Heb. in it.

news is so important that even at the dead of night the messengers hasten it to the bed-side of the king.—*Lamby and Jamieson.*

Many a one gets chances to acquire property dishonestly, to enjoy luxury and debauchery, to gratify fleshly lusts, and to commit other sins; and if he is secure from human eye he does not trouble himself about the all-seeing eye of God; but his crime is discovered at last in his own conscience, and by God's judgment it is revealed and punished. Conscience can, indeed, be numbed for a time; but it will not rest forever; it awakes at last, and stings all the more the longer it has been still.—*Lange.*

Selfishness causes us to overlook the cares of others. SEE ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. THE SAVED CITY. Verses 12-16.

12. One can easily picture this pathetic scene: the jaded king aroused from his slumbers; the counselors suddenly summoned to the palace; the universal apprehension. I will now show you—Similar stratagems have been so often resorted to in the ancient and modern wars of the East that there is no wonder Jehoram's suspicions were awakened. But the scouts whom he dispatched soon found unmistakable signs of the panic that had struck the enemy and led to this most precipitate flight.—*Jamieson.* This king had made a noble defense; he seems to have shared in all the sufferings of the besieged, and to have been ever at his post.—*Clarke.*

Frightened men nearly always underestimate the timidity of their foes. Secular history is full of illustrations of this principle, and the Church has over and over again suffered temporary defeat by forgetting it.

13. The attendants of the mistrustful king give him very sensible advice. Five was a general designation of a small number. See Isa. 80. 17; 1 Cor. 14. 19; Lev. 26. 8. Perhaps because ten, which is twice five, was the ancient emblem of perfection and completeness, five came to denote the imperfect and the incomplete; so that the phrase means "a few." Horses—According to verse 14 (two chariots) there may not have been five, but four. Two chariots, or equipages, being sent, in order, possibly, that if one were captured the other might quickly bring the news.—*B&A.* But see note below. They are as all the multitude—"All of us in this city are about to perish with famine, and they who go forth to spy the camp of the enemy can fare no worse than we." This reason was like that of the lepers in verse 4.—*Terry.*

14. Two chariot horses—Literally, two chariot of horses; that is, two span of horses; horses enough to accompany two chariots.—*Terry.*

Authorized Version.

15 And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and ^dvessels, which the Syr'i-ans had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king.

16 And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syr'i-ans. So a measure of fine flour *was sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, "according to the word of the LORD.

Revised Version.

15 see. And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the Syr'i-ans had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. And the people went out, and spoiled the camp of the Syr'i-ans. So a measure of fine flour *was sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

^d Or, furniture.—11 Num. 23. 19; Ps. 69. 2; 119. 89; Isa. 40. 8; 44. 26; 55. 11; Matt. 24. 26; Mark 13. 31; 1 Cor. 1. 9; 1 Thess. 5. 24; 1 Pet. 1. 25.

15. **Unto Jordan**—When the heaven-sent noise caused the Syrians to imagine that the Hittites from the north and the Egyptians from the south were upon them, the only safe road would be to make for the Jordan, eastward, and, after crossing it, to conceal themselves in the mountains on the other side.—*Cambridge Bible*. **All the way was full of garments and vessels**—A manifest proof of the hurry and precipitancy with which they fled.—*Clarks*. **The messengers returned**—After the Jordan had been reached there could be no more doubt; there was now no fear of an enemy in ambush.—*Lumby*.

16. Elisha's prophecy is fulfilled. Read carefully the rest of the chapter.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Our chastisements are proportioned to our need. Ver. 1.—Some years ago I saw a workman in a glass factory take a piece of glass and put it into three furnaces in succession. I asked him: "Why do you put it into so many fires?" He said, "The first was not hot enough, nor the second, and, therefore, it had to pass through a third, until the intense heat made it transparent." My heart said, "O my God, use the kind and degree of discipline necessary until my soul is all like thee." A skillful physician knows when to use a salve and when a caustic, when a lenitive and when a corrosive. As masters do with scholars, so does he with us—when one lesson is learned he turns over a new leaf for us.—*Whitefield*.

When we are thoroughly subdued, our trial is like the sides of Mt. Etna—terrible while the eruption lasted and the lava flowed, but when that is past, and the lava is turned into soil, it grows vineyards and olive-trees up to the very top.—*Beecher*.

Blind unbelief is sure to err. Ver. 2.—To the minnow every cranny and pebble of its native creek may have become familiar, but does the minnow understand the tides and currents, trade-winds and monsoons by which the conditions of the creek may be upset and reversed? It is so with man confronted with God's highest activities!—*Carlyle*.

A North American Indian returned to his tribe to recount the wonders he had seen at Washington. They were listened to with doubt until he declared he had seen white people attach a great ball to a canoe and so rise into the clouds and travel the heavens. This was pronounced an impossibility, and a young warrior in a paroxysm of anger shot him dead on the spot, as too great a liar to be permitted to live. If what takes place in a different state of society appears so absurd, what wonder the mysteries of God's work should be accounted foolishness!

Not only have photographs of the heavenly bodies been obtained and an absolutely accurate picture of the skies secured, but the camera has revealed stars invisible even with the aid of the most powerful telescope. By continued exposure it obtains an image of an object so faint that a shorter exposure would give no image. This is a power the eye does not possess. As astronomers believe in the revelations of the camera, though they are not confirmed by actual observation, so there are spiritual realities claiming our belief though they are beyond our comprehension.

Opposition to God's purpose only injures ourselves. Ver. 2.—You have heard of the sword-fish. It is a curious creature, with a bony beak, or sword, in front of its head. It is so fierce that it not only attacks other fishes, but I saw one dart at a ship in full sail so violently

as to pierce the solid timbers. The ship sailed on as before, while the fish fell a victim to its own rage.—*Bowes*.

In the days of his prosperity Julian pointed his dagger to heaven, defying the Son of God. But when he was wounded in battle he gathered up his clotted blood and threw it in the air, exclaiming: "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!"

Self-effort is a step toward salvation. Ver. 3.—A young man stood listlessly watching some anglers on a bridge. Approaching a basket filled with fish, he said: "If I only had these I could sell them, buy food, and be happy." "I will give you as many," said the owner, "if you will do me a trifling favor." "What is that?" asked the other. "Only tend this line while I go on a short errand." The proposal was accepted. The fish bit so greedily that when the owner had returned the young man had caught an immense number. Counting out as many as were in the basket, and presenting them to the young man, the fisherman said: "I fulfill my promise out of the fish you have caught to teach you to waste no time in foolish wishing, but cast a line for yourself."

"It is just a year this day," says *Mrs. Judson*, "since I obtained a hope in Christ. I was reflecting on the words, 'If we enter into the city, then famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here we die also,' and felt that if I returned to the world I should surely perish; if I stayed where I then was, I should perish; and that I ought at once to fly to Christ. Then came light, relief, comfort, such as I never knew before."

A man knelt for prayer in one of our meetings, at the same time saying: "I have no feeling, but act purely on my judgment. I know I ought to be a Christian." In a day or two he saw clearly the justice of God in his condemnation. He came to my room in the night in the greatest distress, crying almost in despair: "What shall I do? O I am such a sinner!" The way to get feeling is to act.—*Earle*.

Extremities make men brave. Ver. 4. Lord Beaconsfield was once driving to the House of Commons with his wife. Immersed in thought, he alighted from his brougham and closed the door on one of his wife's fingers. Though in great pain, she uttered no cry until he was out of ear-shot. Then, as the footman released the imprisoned finger, she fainted. Speaking of the mishap to her husband, she said: "I would not have cried out for the world. You would have been so agitated that the most important parts of your speech might have been omitted."

Fuller knowledge often dispels our fears. Ver. 5. I have seen a little child, who had cut her finger, entreat that it might be tied up without ever being looked at. But when it was looked at and washed, she saw how little a thing it was for all the blood that came from it, and about nine tenths of her fear fled away.—*Boyd*.

Being once surrounded by a dense mist on the Styhead Pass in the English lake district, we felt ourselves transported into a world of mystery, where every thing was swollen to a vast size and terrible appearance. A mountain tarn as large as a farmer's horse-pond expanded into a great lake whose distant shores were leagues beyond the reach of our poor optics. As we descended, the rocks one side looked like the battlements of heaven, and the descent on the other like the dreadful lips of a yawning abyss; yet in the morning light there was nothing dangerous in the pathway or terrible in the rocks. Our ignorance makes us magnify foes and difficulties.—*Spurgeon*.

Guiltily men are easily alarmed. Ver. 6. An ancient king was asked by his brother why he was so pensive. "Because," said he, "I have judged others and now I must be judged myself!" "And why," said the brother, "be troubled about this? It is a long time distant, and is but a light matter." It was the custom then in cases of treason to sound a trumpet at the offender's door in the night-time, and he was next day executed. The king, therefore, had this done at his brother's door, who immediately came quaking to the palace to plead for life. "Why," said the king, "are you so troubled, seeing you shall be judged by your brother for a matter your conscience tells you you are clear from? How much more may I tremble with God for my judge and conscience my accuser!"—*Brooks*.

When the Spanish Armada was hovering on the English coast, a company of strolling players were performing a piece called "Samson," in a booth at Penryn. The enemy, having silently landed a body of men, were making their way to surprise the town, when, fortunately, at that instant the players let Samson loose on the Philistines. The sound of drums, trumpets, shouts,

and the mock firing of ordnance created such a tremendous hubbub that the Spaniards fancied the whole town was pouring down upon them, and immediately scampered off to their ships.

Selfishness causes us to overlook the woes of others. Ver. 8. It is recorded of an alderman of London that, on being importuned for alms by a starving woman in the street, he exclaimed: "Go away, my good woman; you don't know how you distress me. I'd give ten pounds to have your appetite."

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **Tell the story**, or—always a better plan—bring out the story by questions from the class. Begin with the picture of a city in distress, as shown in the previous chapter; describe the wretchedness of the people; state the promise of Eliha; how it was fulfilled, etc.

2. In such an interesting and remarkable story there will be danger of neglecting the **spiritual and practical lessons**. Therefore, while relating the events, keep before the class **the divine side of the history**. Israel was the people of God, upon whom the world's salvation depended. God directed affairs in the interest of his cause. Show in this story: 1.) A *divine* deliverance. 2.) A *sudden, unexpected* deliverance. 3.) A deliverance *foreseen by the prophet*, who lived in fellowship with God. 4.) A deliverance through *unconscious instrumentalities*. 5.) A *complete* deliverance.

8. We may find in this lesson **four types of character**. 1.) *The man of God*, calm in danger, confident, bold, trustful, because in communion with God. 2.) *The unbeliever*. Ver. 2. An "agnostic," ignorant of God, believing only in what he could see, and despising spiritual realities. 3.) *The man of the world*, represented by the four lepers, diseased with sin, doomed to death, yet reveling in pleasures. How ghastly the feast of those lepers in the deserted camp! How like all the pleasures of this world! 4.) *The fickle mind* (King Jehoram), vacillating between doubt and trust, and easily losing confidence in God. Which of these four classes would you choose?

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LESSON II.—April 12.

THE GOOD AND EVIL IN JEHU.—2 KINGS 10. 18-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.—1 Sam. 16. 7.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—884 B. C.

PLACE.—Samarra, the capital of Israel.

PERSONS. 1. Jehu, the tenth king of the separate kingdom of Israel; a soldier in Ahab's army; "captain of the host" under Jehoram; anointed to be king by a messenger from Elisha, while besieging Ramoth-gilead; destroyed the royal family and the worship of Baal; was half-hearted in his service of Jehovah and unsuccessful in his wars with the Syrians. Died 856 B. C. 2. Jehonadab, the son of Bechab, a representative member of the peculiar tribe of Rechabites, whose ideal of life was a cross between monasticism and the life of Bedouins. 3. The worshippers of Baal.

Authorized Version.

18 And Je'hu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, 'A'h'ab served Ba'al a little; but Je'hu shall serve him much.

19 Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Ba'al, ² all his servants, and

Revised Version.

18 And Je'hu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, A'h'ab served Ba'al a little; but Je'hu shall

19 serve him much. Now therefore, call unto me all the prophets of Ba'al, all

11 Kings 16, 21, 22.—91 Kings 22, 6.

I. WHAT JEHU DID. Verses 18-28.

18. Ahab served Baal a little; . . . Jehu . . . much.—He was believed when he said that he would serve Baal far more than Ahab had done, because his entire enterprise was regarded as a military revolution, like that of Baasha and Zimri, in which the thing at stake was the supreme power and the throne, not at all a religious reform and the restoration of the service of Jehovah. —*Bähr*. Idolatry was the worm at the root of the Israelitish nationality; it was high treason to the Israelitish State. Under the new covenant it is not permitted to make use of fire and sword against heresy and superstition. No other weapon may here be used than that of the Spirit, that is, the word of God.—*Lange*.

Wrong is never right. A work which is in itself pure and holy loses its value when it is accomplished by falsehood and dissimulation. One cannot battle for the truth with the weapons of falsehood. Rom. 8. 8.—*Lange*. I can commend the zeal of Jehu; I cannot commend the fraud of Jehu. We may come to our end, even by crooked ways. He that bade him to smite for him did not bid him to lie for him. Falsehood, though it be but tentative, is neither needed nor approved by the God of truth. If policy has allowed officious untruths, religion never.—*Bishop Hall*. Men are often severely virtuous in spots. A false heart may laudably quit itself of some one gross sin and in the meantime hug some lesser evil that may condemn it; as a man recovered of a fever may die of jaundice or a dropsy.—*Bishop Hall*.

One's recognition of another's sins sometimes blinds one to one's own. Jehu dissimulated in order to circumvent the hypocrites and idolaters, and never recognized the hypocrite and idolater in himself.—*Lange*.

God makes the wrath of man to praise him.

One cannot easily break one commandment, and stop there. Appeal to the experience and observation of your scholars for illustrations of this truth.

Loud professions not always sincere. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

19. Call unto me all the prophets of Baal. The priests and worshippers of Baal were so involved in the fortunes of Ahab's dynasty that, with them living, Jehu must sit insecurely on the

Authorized Version.

his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Ba'al; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Je'hu did *it* in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshipers of Ba'al.

20 And Je'hu said, "Proclaim a solemn assembly for Ba'al. And they proclaimed *it*."

21 And Je'hu sent through all Is'ra-el; and all the worshipers of Ba'al came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the 'house of Ba'al; and the house of Ba'al was *b* full from one end to another.

22 And he said unto him that *was* over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshipers of Ba'al. And he brought them forth vestments.

Revised Version:

his worshipers, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Ba'al; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Je'hu did *it* in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshipers of Ba'al. And Je'hu said, Sanctify a solemn assembly for Ba'al.

21 And they proclaimed *it*. And Je'hu sent through all Is'ra-el; and all the worshipers of Ba'al came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Ba'al; and the house of Ba'al was filled from one end to another. And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshipers of Ba'al. And he brought

a Sanctify. — 1 Kings 16. 32. — Or, so full, that they stood mouth to mouth.

throne.—*Terry*. They might be easily convened into one spacious temple, for their number had been greatly diminished both by the influential ministrations of Elijah and Elisha, and also from the late King Joram's neglect and discontinuance of the worship.—*Jamieson*. It was done, however, not from religious, but purely political, motives, because he believed that the interests of the Baalites were inseparably bound up with the dynasty of Ahab, and because he hoped that by their extermination he would secure the attachment of a far larger and more influential party who worshiped God in Israel.—*Bible Commentary*. *Je'hu did it in subtilty*—His craft and guile on this occasion were in fearfulness equal to the duplicity and baseness which prepared the way for the massacre of St. Bartholomew. His divine commission, doubtless, authorized him to cut off the worshipers of Baal, but not by guile. God praised his zeal in rooting out idolatry, but not his subtilty.—*Terry*. We may judge from the ready acceptance of the announcement in this verse that Je'hu had been no different from the rest, and had gone in the way where Ahab and Jezebel led.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Desperate diseases need desperate remedies.

God's service demands sincerity, and does not need deceit. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

21. The house of Baal—"House" is the constant word for "temple" in the Old Testament, and no doubt this building was as magnificent as the architectural skill of Tyrian workmen and the zeal of the house of Ahab, with whom architecture seems to have been a passion, could make it. Hence it would be large enough to contain in its spacious courts an immense number of worshipers. For "house" used of Solomon's temple see 1 Kings 8. 13, 16-19, and constantly in the history of David and Solomon.—*Cambridge Bible*. A large and probably a rambling structure built by Ahab (1 Kings 16. 32), in which lodged 450 priests of Baal and 400 of Astarte. **From one end to another**—From one entrance to the other.—*Cambridge Bible*. The reference is to the outer court, in which the altar of sacrifice stood, for the house, strictly speaking, that is, the sanctuary or shrine in which the statue of Baal was, was doubtless, as in all temple structures, very small.—*Lange*.

The zeal of idolaters sometimes rebukes the apathy of Christians. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Broad is the way that leads to death, and many there be that find it. Even to-day the houses in which worship is rendered to the "gods of this world"—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—are full from one end to another, while the churches have many vacant seats.

22. He said unto him that was over the vestry—The vestry must have belonged to the house of Baal; we cannot suppose that the king's wardrobe-keeper had a stock of robes to supply such a multitude of worshipers. Probably because of the control which had been exercised there

Authorized Version.

23 And Je'hu went, and Je-hon'a-dab the son of Re'chab, into the house of Ba'al, and said unto the worshipers of Ba'al, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshipers of Ba'al only.

24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings, Je'hu appointed fourscore men without, and said, *If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, 'his life shall be for the life of him.*

25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, that Je'hu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the 'edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Ba'al.

26 And they brought forth the ⁴images

Revised Version.

23 them forth vestments. And Je'hu went, and Je-hon'a-dab the son of Re'chab, into the house of Ba'al; and he said unto the worshipers of Ba'al, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshipers of Ba'al

24 only. And they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings. Now Je'hu had appointed him fourscore men without, and said, *If any of the men whom I bring into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.*

25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Je'hu said to the 'guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Ba'al. And they brought forth the

⁴ 1 Kings 10. 29. —c The month. —d Statues; 1 Kings 14. 23.

¹ Heb. runners.

by the house of Ahab Jehu could give orders in Baal's temple and have them obeyed. It appears from the narrative that vestments were used not only by the priests, but by all the worshipers as well. Perhaps there was some distinction between the character and material of the robes. —*Cambridge Bible.* Garments of byssus were the peculiar dress of priests in all ancient countries. According to *Josephus*, it was especially important for Jehu that all the *priests* of Baal should be there. They all received priestly garments, and became thereby all the more easily recognizable by the eighty men who were commanded to slay them before all others.—*Lange.*

23. Search—He thus gave himself the appearance of a strict adherent of Baal; but his object was to take care that no servant of Jehovah should be killed.—*Lange.*

Good men are safer out of the society of the wicked. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

25. Jehu said to the guard—The "guard" is that body of "runners" which appears in the history as soon as a king was appointed, and which played a part in all state parade. Thus both Adonijah and Absalom provided them with "fifty men to run before them" when they aspired to the throne. 2 Sam. 15. 1; 1 Kings 1. 5. They are first spoken of in 1 Sam. 22. 17, where the text of Authorized Version gives "footmen;" Revised Version "guard," with "runners" in the margin. Such men must necessarily be of great physical strength, and so well suited to do Jehu's work on this occasion.—*Cambridge Bible.* This treacherous massacre, and the means taken to accomplish it, are paralleled by the slaughter of the Janissaries and other terrible tragedies in the modern history of the East.—*Terry.* And went to the city of the house of Baal—The word rendered "city" is applied to smaller inclosures than we usually understand by it now, and seems here to indicate some principal part of the temple edifice. In illustration of the use of this word for some small place, see Num. 18. 19, "What *cities* they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strongholds." So, too, the desolate daughter of Zion is compared (Isa. 1. 8) to "a cottage in a vineyard, a lodge in a garden of cucumbers," and then, in parallelism with these figures, to "a besieged city." In such passages also as Gen. 4. 17 *city* can only signify some solid, substantial dwelling-place in distinction to the tents of the nomad population.—*Cambridge Bible.*

26. Brought . . . the images—These are supposed to have been wooden statues or pillars consecrated to Baal or some of his associate deities.—*Terry.* It is to be noticed, however, that

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
out of the house of Ba'al, and burned them.	'pillars that were in the house of
27 And they brake down the image of Ba'al, and brake down the house of Ba'al, and 'made it a draught-house unto this day.	27 Ba'al, and burned them. And they brake down the pillar of Ba'al, and brake down the house of Ba'al, and made it a draught-house, unto this
28 Thus Je'hu destroyed Ba'al out of Is'ra-el.	28 day. Thus Je'hu destroyed Ba'al out
29 Howbeit <i>from</i> the sins of Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat, who made Is'ra-el to sin, Je'hu departed not from after them, <i>to wit</i> , the 'golden calves that <i>were</i> in Beth'-el, and that <i>were</i> in Dan.	29 of Is'ra-el. Howbeit from the sins of Jer'o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat, 'wherewith he made Is'ra-el to sin, Je'hu departed not from after them, <i>to wit</i> , the golden calves that were in
80 And the LORD said unto Je'hu, Because thou hast done well in executing <i>that which is</i> right in mine eyes, <i>and</i> hast done unto the house of A'hab according	30 Beth'-el, and that were in Dan. And the LORD said unto Je'hu, Because thou hast 'done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, <i>and</i>

* Ezra 8, 11; Dan, 2, 5; 2, 29.—* 1 Kings 12, 26, 29.

* Or, obelisks.—* Or, who.—* Or, executed well.

the images were *burned* (ver. 26), so that they must have been of wood, while the chief image was "broken in pieces," as the *stone* temple-building was.—*Bähr*.

27. *The image of Baal*—This was probably a vast molten statue of the god, erected outside of the temple, perhaps at the portal. *A draught-house*—A place of refuse and filth.—*Terry*. Probably no buildings were reared to Baal except in the cities where the royal family dwelt. Hence, when they were cut off it would have no fosterers.—*Cambridge Bible*.

For the sake of the weak we should remove stumbling-blocks. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

28. The rooting-out of the house of Ahab and the attendant overthrow of idolatry, the latter of which not even Elijah had succeeded in accomplishing, were accomplished by Jehu. It was in truth an act of kindness toward Israel, which otherwise would, at this time, have gone to ruin. In so far Jehu had accomplished a great deed, which is here recognized and acknowledged. The manner in which he carried it out, in detail, is not, however, approved; especially is it recorded as unsatisfactory that he persisted in the worship of Jeroboam's calves. Such a revolution as this was certainly never accomplished without great internal commotion. Jehu found it necessary to consolidate his authority at home, and could not give his attention to the foreign war. Hazael in the meantime was a very warlike and energetic king, and pushed his conquests with vigor while his enemy was weak. This district was recovered when Israel once more was united and contented under a vigorous ruler (Jeroboam II.). Jehu did, indeed, destroy idolatry, but he did not touch the chief sin of Israel, because he considered it the chief support of his own authority. So many a one renounces gross external sins, but will not think of denying himself, of sacrificing his own interests, and of turning his heart to the living God. He who would stand half-way goes backward in spite of himself. Jehu would not desist from the sins of Jeroboam, because he thought it would cost him his crown, but on that very account he lost one province after another.—*Lange*.

II. WHAT JEHU FAILED TO DO. Verses 29-31.

29. Jehu, as *Kittó* very justly remarked, "was one of those decisive, terrible, ambitious, yet prudent, calculating, and passionless men, whom God from time to time raises up to change the fate of empires and to execute his judgments on the earth. He boasted of his zeal—"Come and see my zeal for the Lord"—but at the bottom it was zeal for Jehu. His zeal was great so long as it led to acts which squared with his own interests, but it cooled marvelously when required to take a direction, in his judgment, less favorable to them."—*Terry*. Golden calves that were—From 1 Kings 12, 28, 29 we see that only *one* image was in each place.

Zeal against evil is no guarantee of personal righteousness. See ILLUSTRATIONS. We should closely examine ourselves for lingering "roots of evil."

Authorized Version.

to all that *was* in mine heart, 'thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Is'-ra-el.

31 But Je'hu *took no *heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Is'-ra-el with all his heart: for he departed not from *the sins of Jer'o-bo'am, which made Is'-ra-el to sin.

Revised Version.

hast done unto the house of A'hab according to all that was in mine heart, thy sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Is'-ra-el. 31 But Je'hu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD, the God of Is'-ra-el, with all his heart: he departed not from the sins of Jer'o-bo'am, wherewith he made Is'-ra-el to sin.

* Chap. 12. 1; 15. 8, 12.—* Observed not.—* Prov. 4. 22.—
 † Lev. 25. 14, 15; Deut. 28. 15; 1 King 12. 30; 12. 34; 14. 16;
 15. 25, 26, 28; 16. 2, 3, 24.

30. Thy children (R. V., sons) of the fourth generation.—For the fulfillment see chapter 15. 12. The son of Jehu was Jehoahaz, who was succeeded by his son Joash, and he by Jeroboam II., with whose son, Zechariah, the fourth generation and the sovereignty of Jehu's family terminated.—*Cambridge Bible.* Jehu's son, Jehoahaz, reigned seventeen years; Jehoash, sixteen; Jeroboam, forty-one, and Zachariah, six months. Zachariah, of the fourth generation, was slain by Shallum, and thus was this word of the Lord fulfilled (comp. chap. 15. 12); and thus, too, according to the prophecy of Hosea (1. 4), did the Lord "avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." For when the minister of divine judgment himself turned to idolatry the very blood of his guilty victims might well call for vengeance on him for doing the same things for which he had executed divine judgment on them. Rom. 2. 1.—*Terry.* When David strives to do God's will perfectly, with a true heart, the promise is that "he shall not be without a lamp before God forever." The partial obedience of Jehu obtains the gift of a succession for four generations.—*Cambridge Bible.* This was all the compensation Jehu had in either world for his zeal for the Lord.—*Clarke.*

31. The But at the commencement of verse 31 is quite correct. Although God commended Jehu, and promised to reward him, yet Jehu did not walk perfectly with God. The origin of the calf-worship was political, and Jehu unquestionably kept it for political reasons.—*Lange.* Jehu took no heed—He never made it his study; indeed, he never intended to walk in this way; it neither suited his disposition nor his politics.—*Clarke.* With all his heart—He only went partially on the right way, and probably personal ambition had much to do with his zeal against Baal. With the calves it was another matter. They formed, as it were, the emblems of Israel's independence, and so the king's feeling would be enlisted on their side.—*Cambridge Bible.*

The awful responsibility of leaders in society.

Heart-worship is the only kind of worship recognized by God. See Lesson V., Third Quarter.

The nearer a man approaches perfection the sadder are his failures. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Professions are not always sincere. Ver. 18.—On the lake of Geneva there stands a castle where prisoners used to be confined, and in it there was a dark dungeon with a dreadful staircase. Sometimes the keeper told a prisoner that he was now to obtain his liberty, and requested him to follow him. Having reached the staircase, he was told to go down in the darkness that he might reach the castle gate, and so be free. Alas! it was a broken stair. A few steps down the man found no footing, but fell sixty feet, to be dashed to pieces on the rocks.

What multitudes of mahogany-handled drawers are to be met in daily life, labeled in black on a gold ground, with swelling and mysterious names of precious healing drugs, but, alas! they are handles which do not pull out, or drawers that are full of nothing.—*Spurgeon.*

The service of God demands sincerity, and does not need deceit. Ver. 19.—In the palmy days of Roman prosperity, when her merchants lived in marble palaces, there was emulation in the adornment of their dwellings. Good sculptors were greatly in demand. But tricks were practiced then as now. If the sculptor came upon a flaw in the marble he skillfully filled the chink with a carefully prepared wax. In process of time, however, heat would

reveal its presence. Hence, in new contracts for sculptures, a clause was added that they were to be *sine cerâ*, "sincere" (without cement).—*Tusseyman*.

Two bricklayers were building a wall. One of them, in placing a brick, saw it was thicker on one side than the other. His companion advised him to throw it aside. "My mother," he added, "taught me that ever so little an untruth is a lie, and whether in work or character will always work harm sooner or later." The other ridiculed this man's exactness, and said: "I'll risk it." The wall rose, and got more aslant from the untrue brick, till one night it toppled over.

Some men profess cream and live skim milk.—*Beecher*.

The zeal of idolaters sometimes rebukes the apathy of Christians. Ver. 21.—Some have a true zeal of a false religion and others have a false zeal of a true religion. Paul, before his conversion, was an instance of the former; the lukewarm Laodiceans, of the latter.—*W. A. D.*

In the hottest, as well as in the coldest, climates men love heat. On the introduction of Christianity into Iceland the inhabitants would be baptized only in the hot springs of Hecla; and in the torrid zone the natives flock from all parts to the thermal waters. Religion is a dish to be served hot; when it becomes lukewarm it is sickening.

Good men are safer out of the society of the wicked. Ver. 23.—When a man is known to suffer from a sadly contagious disease none of his friends will come near the house. Why are not men as much afraid of the contagion of vice? Sin is as infectious, and far more deadly, than small-pox or fever.—*Spurgeon*.

On the moors of Yorkshire, England, is a stream of water called the Ocher Spring. At its source it is quite clear, but suddenly becomes a dark, muddy yellow. The reason is it has passed through a bed of ocher, after which it flows for miles useless and unpleasant. Sinful companions are like beds of ocher—*connection with them is pollution*.

Judge Buller cautioned a young man of sixteen against being led astray by the influence of others, and said: "If I had followed some who called themselves my friends when I was young, instead of being a judge I should have long ago died a prisoner."

Sir Peter Lely made it a rule never, when he could avoid it, to look at an inferior picture, having found that when he did so his pencil took a taint from it.

Sophronius would not suffer his grown-up children to associate with those whose conduct was not pure and upright. "Dear father," said a daughter to him one day when he forbade her paying a proposed visit, "you must think us very childish if you imagine we should be exposed to danger by it." The father took, in silence, a dead coal from the hearth and handed it to his daughter, saying: "It will not burn you, my child; take it." Her hand was soiled and blackened, and the father remarked: "You see that coals, if they do not burn, blacken; so it is with the company of the vicious."—*From the German*.

For the sake of the weak we ought to remove stumbling-blocks. Vers. 26, 27.—Two persons went on their way home, one a few feet in advance of the other. In their pathway lay a small piece of orange-peel. The first walked over it, and passed on not thinking of the many travelers on the same road liable to slip and fall. The other passed over it, and on second thought stepped back and moved the stumbling-block out of the way.

The mind is weak where it has once given away. It is as in the case of the mound of a reservoir; if this mound has in one place been broken extra care is necessary to make the repaired part as strong as possible.—*John Foster*.

We see God's care for the weak in providing plants unable to stand by themselves, like the vine and ivy, with tendrils to entwine themselves around some friendly hold-fast, and endowing feeble animals with cunning and arts of self-protection.

There is something peculiarly heroic in the story of a London clergyman who, discovering that he had caught small-pox, resolutely refused to go home, would not even enter a cab which was brought to take him to the hospital, but, hailing a hearse passing by, crept into that, and so was carried safely to the hospital door.—*Miss Mulock*.

Zeal against evil not a guarantee of personal righteousness. Ver. 29.—To be engaged in opposing wrong affords under the condition of our constitution but a slender guarantee for being right.—*Gladstone*.

Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, strongly disliked sentimental, lop-sided virtue. He says: "I have seen enough of boys that hate the devil. Commend me now to the boys that not only hate the devil, but love God."

Do you wish to find out a person's weak points? Note the failings he has the quickest eye for in others. They may not be the very failings he is himself conscious of; but they will be their next-door neighbors.—*Hare*.

The nearer a man gets to perfection the sadder his failures. Ver 31.—Short-comings are the dark blots upon a fair garment or the ragged buttons on a court dress. A lady in traveling one day exclaimed as she passed a splendid house, "Why, there's a broken window!" We overlook the things in order and are grieved at the defects.

In the camphor-tree every part is impregnated with the precious perfume, but a dead branch not only deforms but sadly injures the tree. So unsanctified faculties subtract from symmetry and strength of character.—*W. A. D.*

TEACHING HINTS.

1. Before Jehu's revolution, nine kings had reigned over the Ten Tribes, representing three houses and one usurper. The teacher who desires to give an historical summary might drill his class on the names of these kings, thus: The first house, Jeroboam, Nadab; the second house, Baasha, Elah; the usurper, Zimri; the third house, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram.

2. Sketch the causes leading to the revolution which placed Jehu on the throne. 1.) The influence of Elisha and the prophetic order. Note God's call in 1 Kings 19. 16, and its fulfillment twenty years later, 2 Kings 9. 12, 13.) The power of the army growing during the long siege of Ramoth-gilead. 3.) The reaction from the worship of Baal in favor of the national religion of Jehovah. 4.) The weakness of Ahab's descendants. 5.) The ambition, ability, and energy of Jehu. Notice in this history the conjoining of human and divine forces.

3. Our lesson opens with Jehu on the throne, and reveals the underlying principles of his conduct. Notice his traits: 1.) *Energy*, of which there are many instances. Note especially 9. 18, 20, 24, as well as the lesson. 2.) *Hypocrisy*. He pretended to be a worshiper of Baal at one time, and professed to be a worshiper of Jehovah at another, but was zealous for Jehu all the time. 3.) *Thoroughness*. As far as Jehu went he was uncompromising. He slew the house of Ahab, and the worshipers of Baal. What he did, he did thoroughly. 4.) *Want of principle*. Jehu was a reformer, not from principle, but because of his political relations. He was a Henry VIII. rather than an Oliver Cromwell. Let the teacher present both sides of his character, and show how far he may be an example, and how far a warning, to us.

4. Let us not slur over the destruction of the Baalites. Was it right? The manner of it was not right, for it was by a trick and a deceit; though we must not measure a half-civilized revolutionist by the standards of the New Testament, and expect a Jehu to be as good as a Washington. But the act itself was necessary and right, in that time and under those conditions. The safety of the world in our age required the purity of Israel in that age; for Israel was under training to become in due time God's missionary nation. Moreover, the worship of Baal was attended with the most abominable obscenities and immoralities, and tended toward the destruction of the people through the dissemination of vice.

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LESSON III.—April 19.

JONAH SENT TO NINEVEH.—JONAH 1. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.—Jonah 3. 2.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

PLACES.—1. *Galilee.* 2. *The Mediterranean.* 3. *Joppa*, now Jaffa, the well-known port of Palestine on the Mediterranean. It was fifty miles from Gath-hepher. "Jaffa is one of the oldest cities in the world." 4. *Tarshish.* A city of the Phenicians, in the south of Spain. 5. *Nineveh.* See special article on NINEVEH at the close of this lesson.

PERSONS.—Of Jonah himself very little is known beyond what we gather from this book. There is, however, one other mention of him in the Old Testament, which furnishes us with some particulars concerning him. In 2 Kings 14. 25 we read of Jeroboam II., King of Israel, that "He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher." It can hardly be doubted that the Jonah thus spoken of is the same person as the Jonah of this book. Both are prophets. Both are sons of Amittai; and neither name occurs anywhere else in the Old Testament. Assuming, as we may reasonably do, their identity, we learn from the passage in Kings: a) That Jonah was a prophet of the northern kingdom, Israel; b) that his birthplace was Gath-hepher, a town of lower Galilee, not far from Nazareth, in the tribe of Zebulun; c) and that he exercised the prophetic office either before the reign of Jeroboam II., or very early in that reign. He would thus be a contemporary of Hosea and Amos, if, indeed, he was not earlier than they, and therefore one of the most ancient, if not the most ancient, of the prophets whose writings we possess. According to ordinary chronology Jeroboam's reign was from 828 B. C. to 782 B. C.—*Perowne*.

Authorized Version.

1 Now the word of the LORD came unto 'Jo'nah the son of A-mit'tai, saying,

2 Arise, go to Nin'e-veh, ' that great city, and cry against it; for their ' wickedness is come up before me.

3 But Jo'nah rose up to flee unto Tar'-

Revised Version.

1 Now the word of the LORD came unto Jo'nah the son of A-mit'tai,

2 saying, Arise, go to Nin'e-veh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before 3 me. But Jo'nah rose up to flee unto

¹ 2 Kings 14. 25. — ² Gen. 10. 11. — ³ Gen. 18. 30; Exa 9. 6; Jas. 5. 4.

HIDING IN THE SHIP. Verses 1-10.



1, 2. *Now*—The writer consciously takes up the thread of past history.—*Perowne.* *Jonah*—See introductory note on *PERSONS*. *That great city*—See article on NINEVEH. *Cry against it*—The only case of a prophet being sent to the heathen. *Their wickedness*—The cruelty and licentious rapacity of the Ninevites was proverbial.

God's forbearance has its limits. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Duty is not always smooth and easy. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

God's servants should always "cry out" against wickedness. No vice should be tolerated by Christians. If every one did his whole

duty, drunkenness, the social evil, political corruption, and every other vice would speedily be abolished.

3. *But Jonah rose up to flee*—Not to hide himself from the omnipresent God, but to withdraw from the service of Jehovah, the God-king of Israel.—*Keil and Delitzsch.* The inter-

Authorized Version.

Jonah^a 'from the presence of the LORD, and went down to 'Jop'pa; and he found a ship going to Tar'shish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tar'shish 'from the presence of the LORD.

4 But the LORD 'sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship^b was like to be broken.

Revised Version.

Tar'shish from the presence of the LORD; and he went down to Jop'pa, and found a ship going to Tar'shish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tar'shish from the presence of the LORD. But the LORD 'sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

^a Isa. 23. 1.—^b Josh. 19. 46; 2 Chron. 2. 16; Acts 9. 36.—
Gen. 4. 14.—^c Cast forth.—^d Thought to be broken.

^e Or, hurried.

pretation of *David Kimchi*, "He imagined that if he went out of the land of Israel the spirit of prophecy would not rest upon him," is perhaps not wide of the mark. *Jarchi* to the same effect, "The Shekinah does not dwell out of the land." Though, as *Theodore* observes, he well knew that the Lord of the universe was every-where present, yet he supposed that it was only at Jerusalem he became apparent to men. His concern for the time being was to throw off obedience to God, and for that purpose various motives—ease, indolence, and fear of men—concurrent; a state of mind which every servant of God can readily conceive from the analogy of his own experience. That he actually intended an entire abandonment of duty, the circumstance that he fled as far as possible proves.—*Kleinert*. The reason of Jonah's disobedience is given by himself. Chap. 4. 2. Knowing well the loving kindness of God he anticipated that he would spare the Ninevites on their repentance, and he could not bring himself to be the messenger of mercy to heathen, much less to heathen who, as the Assyrian inscriptions state, had already made war against his own people, and who, as he may have known, were destined to be their conquerors. See the statements of his probable contemporary. Hos. 9. 8; 11. 5.—*Cambridge Bible*.

There is no escape from Almighty God. For he has so arranged the world that the work of every individual is counted upon; and his work is not allowed to stand still, but must be accomplished. Vers. 1, 2. Distance is no protection against him; for to him belong heaven and earth, the sea, and the dry land. Vers. 3, 9. To him the winds and the waves are subject; for he has made all things. Vers. 4, 9. To him also are subject every where, in involuntary fear, the erring hearts of men. Vers. 5, 6. Whoever, then, expects to find in them a refuge against God is deceived. Even things seemingly accidental obey him, whenever he intends to carry out his purpose. Ver. 7. Every thing, however far from or near to him it may be, must finally become an instrument in his hand, (ver. 11-15), and co-operate for the glorifying of his name. Ver. 16.—*Kleinert*.

Disobedience to God is accompanied by fear. See ILLUSTRATIONS. And if one's conscience is so scared that temporarily no fear is felt, that is only a postponement of what will surely come.

4. Sent out a great wind—Hurled a greate wynde into the see.—*Coverdale*. *Josephus* speaks of a violent wind called "the black north wind," which he says sometimes visited the sea off the coast of Joppa. And we read of "a tempestuous wind called Euraquillo" in another part of the same sea, which, rushing down the highlands of Crete, suddenly caught the ship in which St. Paul was sailing, and brought on a tempest scarcely less severe than that to which Jonah was exposed. Acts 27. 14. The modern name Levanter is a witness to the prevalence of such winds in those seas.—*Perouse*. Was like to be broken—Literally, *thought to be broken*, as in the margin. A vivid image or personification in keeping with the graphic style of this book.—*Cambridge Bible*.

When gentleness fails, God has sterner remedies. See ILLUSTRATIONS. But it is the spiritual good of man—not his own vengeance—that God seeks.

All the forces of nature are directed by God. Jehovah, from whom Jonah intends to flee, is Lord of the sea, and the winds are his servants. Psa. 104. 3. One of these servants he sends forth in haste into the sea to draw Jonah from his purpose.—*Kleinert*. Nothing in nature occurs as the mere result of blind force. Earthquakes and ocean calms, sunshine and snow, the balmy breezes of June and the wild west wind of winter—are they not all "sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?" "Success" and "disaster" are alike hurtful to God's enemies and beneficial to his friends.

Authorized Version.

5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that *were* in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jo'nah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

6 So the ship-master came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, 'call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us 'cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jo'nah.

Revised Version.

5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god; and they cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it unto them. But Jo'nah was gone down into the innermost parts of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

6 So the ship-master came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us,

7 that we perish not. And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon

¹ Ps. 107, 28.—² Josh. 7, 14; 1 Sam. 10, 30.

5. The mariners—The Hebrew word is formed from the word for *salt*, and denotes those occupied with the salt sea. So we sometimes speak of a sailor as a "salt."—*Cambridge Bible*. **Were afraid**—For the whole description of their terror and their prayer compare Ps. 107, 23-30; Matt. 8, 23-27.—*Perowne*. **Every man unto his god**—They were probably Phenicians, who had the carrying trade between Joppa and Tarsish. This would account for their multiplicity of gods. The crew, however, may have been composed of men of different nations.—*Cambridge Bible*. **The wares**—The furniture of the ship, movables, spare tackling, etc. In St. Paul's shipwreck a similar course was taken (Acts 27, 19), but the cargo was not thrown overboard till a later period. Ver. 38. Jonah's ship may have been, like Paul's, a corn ship. The export of corn from Joppa was very considerable. See 1 Kings 5, 9; Ezek. 27, 17; Acts 12, 20. **The sides of the ship**—The Hebrew word is not the same as that rendered "ship" earlier in the verse. It occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament, but the verb from which it is derived signifies to "cover" or "board over" (1 Kings 7, 3, 7), so that it is probably used to denote that it was a decked vessel in which Jonah sailed, and that he had, as we should say, "gone below." The "sides of the ship" are what we should call the bottom of the ship, the part in which the two sides meet. **Was fast asleep**—Jonah had probably fallen asleep before the storm began, and slumbered too deeply to be roused by it or by the commotion on board. Our Lord's sleep amidst the storm on the lake (Mark 4, 38) furnishes at once a comparison and a contrast.—*Perowne*.

Distress teaches to pray. If thou dost not know and teach this, thou wilt always be a poor comforter. If the Lord seizes thy heart with violent alarms from anguish of conscience, throw thy wares into the sea. What is thine must perish, and if thou dost not surrender it thou must thyself suffer shipwreck.—*Kleinert*. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Works must be joined with prayer. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Men have no right to depend on prayer if they neglect the proper means of salvation.

6. The shipmaster—Literally, *the chief of the sailors*; that is, the captain. The word here for *sailors* (which is singular and used collectively) is not the same word as that rendered *mariners* in verse 5. It is formed from the Hebrew word for *ropes*. The Hebrews, not being a maritime nation, made but little use of nautical terms. **What meanest thou, O sleeper?**—*What meanest thou by sleeping?* would perhaps be the best translation. It is an exclamation of indignant surprise at the unreasonableness of Jonah's conduct.—*Perowne*.

Lethargy or carelessness in hours of danger is a crime. See ILLUSTRATIONS. And yet men who are in most danger are sometimes least concerned.

7, 8. Finding their prayers as unavailing as their efforts, the sailors conclude that the storm is sent upon them by the gods as a judgment for some crime committed by one of their number, and

Authorized Version.

8 Then said they unto him, ' Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us? What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?

9 And he said unto them, I am a He'brew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

11 Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may

Revised Version.

8 Jo'nah. Then they said unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; what is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what

9 people art thou? And he said unto them, I am a He'brew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

10 Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, What is this that thou hast done? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the

^a Josh. 7. 19.—^c Or, JEHOVAH.—^d With great fear.—^e May be silent from us.

they proceed to cast lots. For whose cause—When the lot detects Jonah, they will not condemn him unheard. They will give him an opportunity of clearing himself, or, like Achan (Josh. 7. 19), of making confession with his own lips. The judicial fairness and calmness of these heathen men, their abstinence from anger and reproach for the wrong done them, their sense of the sanctity of human life, their fear of punishing the innocent, are very strikingly brought out in the whole of this exciting scene.—*Perowne*. It was a common notion among the ancient mariners that an extraordinary storm must be attributed to the indignation of the gods against some guilty person on board the ship.—*Kitto*. The lot fell upon Jonah—An illustration of Prov. 14. 33; comp. Josh. 7. 18; 1 Sam. 14. 42. It is worthy of note that the use of the lot, though frequently mentioned and sanctioned in the Old Testament, and employed even after the ascension in the choice of an apostle to fill the place of Judas, never occurs in the Bible after the day of Pentecost. It would seem to have been superseded by the gift which conferred "a right judgment in all things."—*Cambridge Bible*. What is thine occupation, etc.—This crowding together of questions in their excitement is very true to nature.—*Perowne*. One might see in the scene a terrible tribunal, for the ship was the court of justice, the judges were the sailors, the executioners were the winds, the prisoner at the bar was the prophet, the house of correction and prison of safe-keeping was the whale, and the accuser was the angry sea.—*Philo*. The emergency recalls Jonah to his true self. All the better part of his character now comes out. His conduct throughout the remainder of the chapter is dignified and manly, worthy of a servant and prophet of Jehovah.

God, and not chance, rules our destinies. See ILLUSTRATIONS. This cannot be too deeply impressed on the minds of our scholars.

9. He said, . . . I am a Hebrew—This is the name by which the Jews were known to foreigners. Compare the use of it by *Juvenal* and other classical writers. It is quite in keeping with biblical usage that Jonah employs it in describing himself to the heathen sailors. Had he been addressing one of his own countrymen he would have spoken of himself as an Israelite.—*Perowne*.

10. Why hast thou done this?—Rather, What is this that thou hast done? A question, not of inquiry, but of amazement and reproach. Comp. Gen. 4. 10.—*Perowne*. If professors of religion do wrong they will hear of it from those who make no such profession.—*Fausset*. When the orator Cyprian read the history of the prophet overwhelmed by the waves his soul was violently agitated—it became a means of his conversion—and the result was that he became an eminent teacher of the Church.—*Kleinert*.

Worldly-minded people are often horrified by the inconsistencies of Christian people.

II. CAST INTO THE SEA. Verses 11-17.

11. What shall we do unto thee?—No doubt in their thus appealing to Jonah to tell them what was to be done, instead of at once ridding themselves of him as the acknowledged

Authorized Version.

be calm unto us? for the sea 'wrought, and was tempestuous.

12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for ¹⁰my sake this great tempest is upon you.

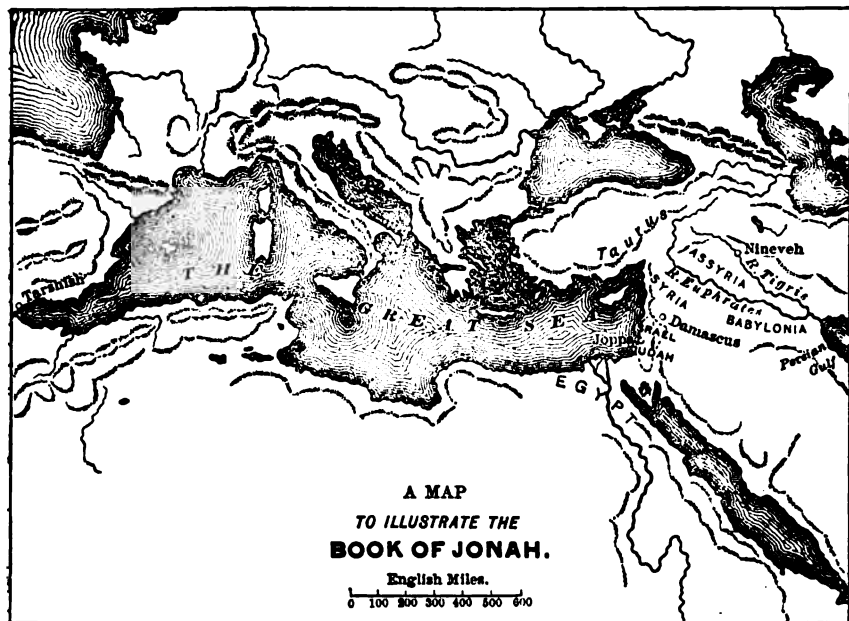
Revised Version.

sea may be calm unto us? for the sea grew more and more tempestuous.

12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great

cause of their calamity, we may recognize their reverence for Jehovah, and in a measure also for his servant.—*Perowne*.

12. The question has been raised whether Jonah ought of his own accord to have offered himself to death; for his doing so seems to be a sign of despair. He might, indeed, have surrendered himself to their will, but here he, as it were, incites them to the deed. **Cast me into the sea**, he says, for in no other way will you appease God than by punishing me. He seems like a man in despair when he thus goes at his own instance to death. But without doubt Jonah recognized that he was divinely summoned to punishment. It is uncertain whether he then conceived a hope of preser-



[FROM PEROWNE.]

vation; whether, that is, with a present confidence he rested on the grace of God; but, however that be, one may gather that he goes forth to death because he perceived, and is assuredly persuaded, that he is in a manner summoned by the clear voice of God. And so there is no doubt that he patiently undergoes the judgment which the Lord has brought against him.—*Calvin*.

True penitence. Jonah herein is a specimen of true repentance, which leads the penitent to "accept the punishment of his iniquity" (Lev. 26. 41, 43), and to be more indignant at his sin than at his suffering.—*Fausset*. Ask your scholars to subject their experience to this test.

The guilty conscience needs no accuser. The heart of every unsaved sinner indorses every awakening appeal he hears, however his lips may belie his conscientious discomfort.

Our sin affects others as well as ourselves. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.

13 Nevertheless the men ^{rowed} hard to bring ^{it} to the land; ¹¹ but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.

14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay ¹² not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

15 So they took up Jo'nah and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ¹³ ceased from her raging.

16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and ¹⁴ offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jo'nah. And ¹⁵ Jo'nah was in the ¹⁶ belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Revised Version.

13 tempest is upon you. Nevertheless the men rowed hard to get them back to the land; but they could not: for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them.

14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

15 So they took up Jo'nah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.

16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly; and they offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made

17 vows. And the LORD prepared a great fish to swallow up Jo'nah; and Jo'nah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

¹ Went, or, grew more and more tempestuous.—¹⁰ Eccl. 9. 18.
² Digged.—¹¹ Prov. 31. 32.—¹² Deut. 31. 8.—¹³ A stood;
Ps. 69. 1.—¹⁴ Sacrificed a sacrifice unto the Lord, and vowed
vows.—¹⁵ Matt. 12. 40; 16. 4.—¹⁶ Bowels.

13. **Rowed hard**—Literally, *digged*. The word is used for digging or breaking through a wall. Job 24. 16; Ezek. 12. 5, 7.—*Perovne*.

Never be eager to condemn even the worst sinner. These pagan sailors gives us a good example. Many a professed Christian hastens to anathematize the sinner in a very unchristian spirit.

14. **Lay not upon us innocent blood**—That is, the guilt of having shed innocent blood. Comp. Deut. 21. 8: **For this man's life**—That is, for having taken it away.—*Perovne*. Thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee—"That Jonah has embarked in this ship, that a tempest has arisen, that he has been detected by casting of lots, that he has passed sentence on himself, is all thy doing."—*Bible Commentary*. These Phenician sailors reverence and would fain save from death a prophet of Jehovah who has come to them unbidden, and has well-nigh compassed their destruction; Jerusalem "killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto her" for their salvation. They show the utmost tenderness for a single life; Jonah, the prophet of the Lord, is worse than regardless of "more than sixscore thousand" human souls.—*Cambridge Bible*.

15. **They took up**—With respect and reluctance, with no struggle on his part, or violence on theirs.—*Perovne*. **Her raging**—Literally, *her anger*.

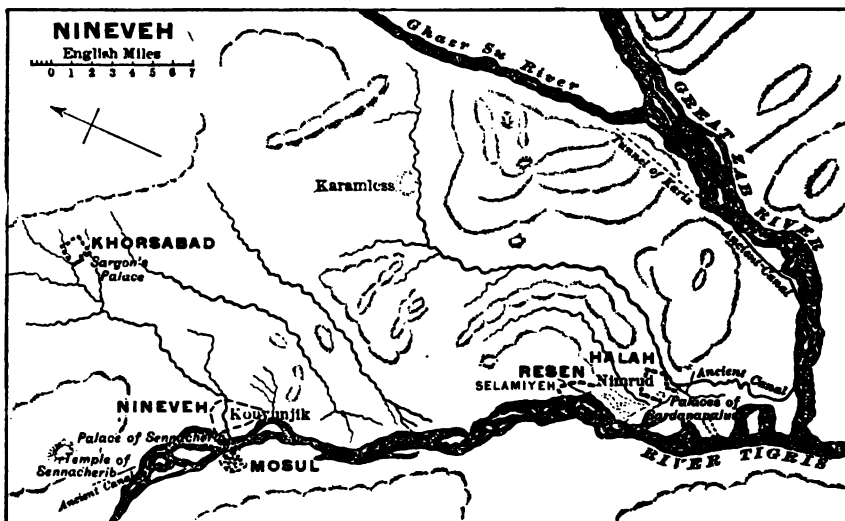
God spares the prayerful penitent. A truth illustrated now in the case of the sailors, presently in that of Jonah, and thirdly in that of Nineveh.—*Fausset*. Is it also illustrated in your class?

16. **Feared the Lord exceedingly**—They had feared exceedingly before (ver. 10, where the Hebrew expression is the same as here), but their fear then was vague and indefinite, now it recognized as its object Jehovah, the God of Jonah. **Offered a sacrifice**—It would certainly seem to be implied that immediately on the ceasing of the storm the sailors offered a sacrifice to Jonah's God, in acknowledgement of what he had already done, and at the same time vowed that they would present to him other gifts and offerings when he would have brought them safe to land. We know but little of the ships of the ancients, but some of them were of considerable size, and there is no difficulty in supposing that there may have been one or more live animals suitable for sacrifice on board Jonah's ship.—*Perovne*.

Divine deliverance should excite our gratitude. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

17. **A great fish**—Probably a shark.—*Cambridge Bible*. He sent the fish there to do his bidding. **Prepared**—The word rendered "appointed" in Job 7. 8; Dan. 1. 5, 10; and "set" in Dan. 1. 11.—*Perovne*. By God's direction it was arranged that the very moment when Jonah

was thrown into the waves the "great fish" was on the spot to receive him. God charged the animal to perform this function, as he afterward "spoke to" it (2. 10), or commanded it, to vomit out the prophet on the dry land.—*Kalisch*. In a word, the whole affair was miraculous, and, as such, is taken out of the category of difficulties. If a whale had never before been in the Mediterranean, God could bring one to the exact spot needed as easily as he brought the ram to the place where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac. He could also furnish the necessary capacity to accomplish the end intended. It is idle, and, worse, cowardly, to withhold our faith in a Bible miracle until we can find or invent some way in which the thing might have happened without any great miracle after all.—*W. M. Thomson*. The preservation of the prophet in the belly of the fish is not more remarkable than that of the three children in the midst of Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace.—*Houghton*. According to Babylonian tradition, a fish-god, or fish-man, named Oannites, was divinely sent to that country, the region of the Euphrates and Tigris, to teach the inhabitants the fear of God and good morals. He came from the sea, and spake with a



[FROM PEROWNE.]

man's voice, teaching only in the day-time, and returning again every night to the sea. Sculptures of this fish-god are frequently found among the ruins of Nineveh. The head and face of a dignified and noble-looking man are seen just below the mouth of a fish, and the hands and arms project from the pectoral fins, and the feet and ankles lower down, and there are other forms, but it is always a *man in a fish*.—*Stowe*. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the common idea of Jonah being swallowed by a *whale* has no real warrant in holy Scripture at all. Our Lord, indeed, is made to say in our English Bibles that Jonah was "in the whale's belly" (Matt. 12. 40); but the word used by him to denote Jonah's fish is taken from the Greek translation of the Book of Jonah, with which he and his hearers were familiar, and cannot be restricted to a whale, or to any of the so-called *Cetaceans*. It means any "sea monster, or huge fish." The Bible does not say that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. The Old Testament simply speaks of "a great fish," and the New Testament employs a strictly equivalent term. Here we may be content to leave the question.—*Cambridge Bible*.

When God's law is broken it is useless to run. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

NINEVEH.

It is evidently the design of the writer of this book to give prominence to the vast size of Nineveh. When he speaks of it, it is with the constant addition, "the great city" (1. 2; 3. 2; 4. 11), and the addition is justified by the statement that it was "great to God," that it was a

city "of three days' journey," and that it contained "more than six-score thousand persons unable to discern between their right hand and their left, and also much cattle" (4. 11). In seeking to verify this description, and identify, with some reasonable degree of probability, the Nineveh of Jonah, we have first to determine what is meant by the expression "a city of three days' journey." It has been held that the "three days' journey" describes the time that would be occupied in traversing the city from end to end, along "the high street," representing the greatest length or "the diameter" of the town, which ran from one principal gate to the opposite extremity. (*Kalisch*.) But unless we are prepared to regard the figures given in the text as "the natural hyperboles of a writer who lived long after the virtual destruction of the city, and who, moreover, was anxious to enhance the impressiveness of his story and lesson, by dwelling on the vastness of the population whose fate depended on their moral regeneration" (*Ibid.*), we shall find it difficult to accept the gratuitous assumption that Nineveh is here described as a city "about fifty-five English miles in diameter," with a "high street" fifty-five miles long. Nor is it more satisfactory to suppose that by a city of three days' journey is meant a city which it would require three days to go all over. No intelligible idea of size could possibly be conveyed by such a definition. Adopting, then, the more reasonable view that the "three days' journey" refers to the circumference of the city, and estimating a day's journey at about twenty miles, we have Nineveh here described as comprising a circuit of about sixty miles. Whether this large area was secured by continuous walls we cannot certainly say. One ancient writer, indeed (*Diodorus Siculus*), asserts that it was, and that the walls were "one hundred feet high, and broad enough for three chariots to drive abreast upon" (*Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Nineveh"); and he, moreover, gives the dimensions of the city as an irregular quadrangle, of about sixty miles in circuit. But without relying too much upon his testimony, which may be regarded as doubtful, we may conclude that an area, such as has been described, was sufficiently marked out to be known and spoken of as the city of Nineveh. This vast area was not, however, completely covered, as in the case of our own cities, with streets and squares and buildings. That was a feature unusual, and almost unknown, in the ancient cities of the East. It was, perhaps, the feature which, belonging to Jerusalem by virtue of the deep ravines by which it was surrounded, and which "determined its natural boundaries," and prevented its spreading abroad after the fashion of other Oriental cities, called forth the surprise and admiration of the Jews after their return from Babylon. "Jerusalem," they exclaim, "(unlike Babylon, where we so long have dwelt), is built as a city which is compact together." Like Babylon, Nineveh included not only parks and "paradises," but fields under tillage, and pastures for "much cattle" (4. 11) in its wide embrace. The most probable site of the city thus defined will be seen by reference to the accompanying plan. It lies on the eastern bank of the Tigris, in the fork formed by that river and the Ghazr Su and Great Zab, just above their confluence. The whole of this district abounds in heaps of ruins. Indeed, "they are found," it is said, "in vast numbers throughout the whole region watered by the Tigris and Euphrates, and their confuents, from the Taurus to the Persian Gulf." "Such mounds," it is added, "are especially numerous in the region to the east of the Tigris, in which Nineveh stood, and some of them must mark the ruins of the Assyrian capital." (*Dictionary of the Bible*.) Four of these great masses of ruins, which will be found marked on the plain, Kouyunjik, Nimrud, Karamless, Khorsabad, form together an irregular parallelogram of very similar dimensions to those mentioned in the text. From Kouyunjik (lying opposite Mosul), on the eastern bank of the Tigris, a line drawn in a south-east direction, parallel to the course of the river, to Nimrud is about eighteen miles. From Nimrud, in a northerly direction, to Karamless is about twelve. The opposite sides of the parallelogram, from Karamless to the most northerly point, Khorsabad, and from Khorsabad to Kouyunjik again, are about the same. These four vast piles of buildings, with the area included in the parallelogram which they form, are now generally identified with the site of the Nineveh which Jonah visited.—*Perowne*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

God's forbearance has its limits. Ver. 2. Wrath and threatening are invariably mingled with love. It is well for us to dwell with thankfulness on the unfolding of the flower and the falling of the dew and the sleep of the green fields in the sunshine; but the blasted trunk, the barren rock, the moaning of the bleak winds, the roar of the black perilous whirlpools of the

mountain streams, and the continual fading of all beauty into darkness—have these no language for us?—*Ruskin*.

Theon, one of Hillel's disciples, was one day reading in the Holy Scriptures. Unable to reconcile what he read of the wrath and love of God, he closed the book and appealed to his teacher for aid. Hillel said: "Listen to my story. There lived in Alexandria two fathers, wealthy merchants, who had two sons of the same age, and they sent them to Ephesus on business. Both had been instructed in the religion of their fathers. The youths yielded to the allurements of Ephesus and became idolaters. When Cleon, one of the fathers, heard of this he was wroth, went to the other father and told him of the apostasy of their sons. The latter laughed, and said: 'If business prosper with my son it matters not about religion.' Cleon was still more wroth. Which of the two was the better?" said Hillel. "He who was wroth," answered Theon. "And which was the kinder father?" asked the preceptor. "He who was wroth," again answered Theon. "Was Cleon wroth with his son?" asked Hillel. And Theon replied: "Not so much with his son as with his son's apostasy." "From this," said Hillel, "thou canst think divinely of that which is divine."

Duty is not always smooth and easy. Ver. 2. John Maynard, "the helmsman of Lake Erie," when the steamer was on fire, had to hold fast by the wheel in the very jaws of the flames, so as to guide the vessel into the harbor and save the many lives within her, at the cost of his own fearful agony while being slowly scorched to death in the flames.

Napoleon honored two of his most skillful engineers by detailing them to explore the path across the Alps. They returned with an appalling recital of the insurmountable difficulties in the way. "Is it possible to construct and prepare the pass?" asked the emperor. "It is barely possible," was the reply. "*Forward, then!*" was Napoleon's inflexible command.—*Abbott*.

Our hardest duties are the veils under which God hides himself as he draws near to us. Recognizing every distasteful employment as done for him is the elixir of life that turns baser metals into gold, its mean activities into holy offerings.

Disobedience to God is accompanied by fear. Ver. 3. A burglar rifled an unoccupied dwelling. He heaped his plunder in the parlor. There were evidences that he sat down here to rest. On a bracket in the corner stood a marble bust of Guido's "*Ecce Homo*"—Christ crowned with thorns. The guilty man had taken it in his hands—for it bore his finger-marks—and replaced it *with its face turned to the wall*, dreading that the sightless eyes of the marble Saviour should look upon his deeds of infamy.—*Phelps*.

One that owed much money and had many creditors, as he walked the London streets in the evening, a tenter-hook caught in his cloak. "At whose suit?" said he, conceiving some bailiff had arrested him. Thus guilty consciences are afraid that every creature they meet is a sergeant sent from God to punish them.—*Fuller*.

According to an Eastern tale, a great magician presented his prince with a ring. Its inestimable value arose not from the diamonds, rubies, pearls that gemmed it, but from a mystic property in the metal. It sat easily enough in ordinary circumstances, but when the wearer committed a bad action it pressed painfully on his finger, punishing him for sin. The voice of God within us is such a ring to the poorest of us.—*Guthrie*.

When gentleness fails, God has sterner remedies. Ver. 4. "I had," says Latimer, describing his training as a yeoman, "my bows bought me according to my age and strength; as I increased in them so my bows were made bigger and bigger." Thus God deals gently with Lydia, tenderly with Thomas, and powerfully with a volatile Jacob and a fiery Saul.—*W. A. D.*

Seeing some men in a field one day I went to them, and found they were cutting up the trunk of an old tree. I said: "That is slow work; why do you not split it asunder with the beetle and wedge?" "Ah," was the reply, "this wood is so cross-grained and stubborn that it requires something sharper than wedges to get it to pieces." "Yes," I said, "and that is the way God deals with obstinate sinners; if they will not yield to one of his instruments he will use another."—*Grigg*.

Cecil observed a fine pomegranate-tree in a London garden cut almost through the stem near the root. The gardener said this tree used to bear nothing but leaves. After trying many expedients he was obliged to cut it, and when almost cut through it began to bear plenty of fruit.

"At their wits' end all men pray." Ver. 5. A celebrated atheist poet declared prayer but a base superstition, and religion the iron fetters of a rapacious priesthood. So he held when sailing over the unruffled surface of the Black Sea. But his creed changed with the change

of the scene. In a furious storm the ship became unmanageable, and drifted before the tempest. The cry, "Breakers ahead!" was heard, and Death seemed seated on the horrid reef waiting for his prey. By a singular providence they were saved. But ere that happened the atheist was seen prostrate with fear among some Romanists telling their beads and crying to the Virgin. His speculations were blown away like so many cobwebs.—*Guthrie*.

Works must be joined with prayer. Ver. 5. A German priest walking with his parishioners over their fields to bless them, when he came to an unpromising crop would pass on, saying, "*Here prayers avail nothing; these must have a fertilizer.*"

A godly minister was asked by a man he was urging to a better course, to *pray* for him. Drink was this man's besetment, and it had taken him from Christ and from his church. Our friend replied: "Two things are necessary in your case—*fasting* as well as prayer. Now, I will pray if you will fast." The man would not agree to abstain from drink, and so our friend said prayer would be of no avail without it.—*Warner*.

Men who are in most danger are sometimes least concerned. Ver. 6.—The ship *Britannia*, which struck on the coast of Brazil, had on board a large consignment of Spanish dollars. Several barrels of them were brought on deck, but the ship sank so fast the sailors had to take to the boats. As the last boat was leaving, a sailor rushed around to see if any one was left. He found a man breaking the barrels with a hatchet, and shouted, "Escape for your life; the ship is going to pieces." "The ship may," he said; "I am determined to die rich."

Madame Au Desfant was conspicuous in the gay circles of France. Death seized her while in the act of playing cards with a gay company of friends. With hardened indifference the rest of the party played out the game before they gave the alarm.—*Grimm*.

The fireman of a New York river steam-boat spent the day in a drinking bout. At daybreak, being alone on the boat, he connected the tanks in the boat with the hydrant on the wharf, turned the water on, and then fell asleep. The boat filled, and with great difficulty he was aroused in time to escape while the boat sank in twenty-five feet of water.

A German in this country invested his property in one large and beautiful diamond. Returning to his native land he surprised the passengers by juggling with some coins. Finally he stepped to the edge of the ship, took out his diamond, and boastfully threw it up and caught it. His fellow passengers protested, advised, warned, but in vain. It at last slipped through his fingers and fell into the sea.

God, and not chance, rules our destinies. Vers. 7, 8.—People say, "How fortunate that things have turned out just as they have!" As if God did not arrange the whole! One might as well say, "How fortunate that I have a neck beneath my head, and shoulders under my neck!"—*Becker*.

Alexander caused to be painted on a table a sword within a wheel, to show that what he had gotten by the sword was wheeled about by chance or fate. But the believer can say:

"In each event of life how clear
Thy ruling hand I see!"

Our sin affects others as well as ourselves. Vers. 11, 12.—A man whose garden was injured by a troublesome weed said it was due to a neighbor's neglect. He had let his garden run wild, and when the seeds of this particular weed were ripe the wind blew them over the fence. So one sin may make many innocent people suffer.

How the world was agape when it came out that a neglected handful of some aquatic seed dropped into one of the English canals had completely choked up the water-ways for miles! Just so the effects of our deeds abide and extend.—*Grosart*.

When God's law is broken it is useless to run. Vers. 15-17.—In the olden times in Florence if an assassin could contrive to eat a sop of bread and wine at the grave of the murdered man within nine days he was free from the vengeance of the family. To prevent this they kept watch at the tomb. We cannot evade God in this way.—*Longfellow*.

When the plague raged in London Lord Craven prepared his coach-and-six with baggage to retire to his country-seat. As he was about to start one Negro servant said to another, "I suppose by my lord's leaving London his God lives in the country and not in the town." The seasonable speech made the nobleman pause. "*My God*," thought he, "lives every-where. I will stay where I am."

Divine deliverance should excite our gratitude. Ver. 16.—When Bishop Hutton, of Durham, was once traveling through his diocese he left his horse with a servant, retired from the highway, and knelt down in prayer. He explained that when a poor boy he traveled over that mountain without shoes or stockings, and disturbed a cow on that identical spot that he might warm his feet where she lay. He could not pass without thanking God.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. Notice that for the first time in our lessons **Nineveh** comes into notice. This is significant, and suggests the true purpose and thought of this book. At first Judah was the rival kingdom to Israel; then Syria; now it is Nineveh, the center of the great empire which at the period of the lesson was threatening the subjugation of the Eastern world. Describe the empire which Nineveh established, and show its relation to Israel.

2. Remember that **Jonah**, and not the whale, is the central figure in this story. Don't waste time in discussing the possibility or method of the miracle. Get at the meaning of the event; and this is disclosed in the study of Jonah. He was an Israelite, probably a disciple of Elisha, an inspired prophet, and in communication with God. How high were his privileges!

3. Observe **Jonah's mission**. He was to go and preach repentance to Nineveh. Why did he refuse to go? Not because he was afraid, but because he was unwilling. He did not want Nineveh to be saved; he wanted it to be destroyed. As an Israelite, he foresaw its danger to Israel. See in Jonah the sectarian spirit, leading to rebellion against God's will. He was really afraid that God would have mercy upon Nineveh! See Jonah 4. 2.

4. Next notice **Jonah's discipline**; how he was taught the value of even Gentiles' souls. The storm showed the true spirit of these heathen sailors. They were earnest in prayer, kind to the prophet, ready to risk their own lives to save his. Jonah was led to see that even in Gentile hearts was the spirit of true worship and service of God. These people were worth saving; and at last Jonah seems to have found this out.

5. Study the **character of God** as revealed in this lesson. He is shown, not as the God of Jews only, but of Gentiles as well; as just in punishing sin; as merciful in sending warning; omniscient, watching men from Nineveh to the sea; as almighty, controlling the forces of nature; as actuated by love to man. The deeper view of this book shows that it is one of the earliest indications of salvation for the Gentile world.

6. Lastly, the **miracle of Jonah in the fish's belly**. Accept it as a miracle, and find its interpretation, as given by Jesus Christ, in Matt. 12. 40, 41. There we learn the double purpose of this event; to show the salvation of the Gentile world, and to foreshadow the resurrection of Christ.

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LESSON IV.—April 26.

NINEVEH BROUGHT TO REPENTANCE.—JONAH 3. 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.—Luke 11. 32.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Probably in the ninth century before Christ. See Lesson III.

PLACE.—Nineveh. The parallelogram in central Assyria covered with the remains of buildings has Khorsabad, north-east; Koyunjik and Nebbi Yunus near the Tigris, north-west; Nimrud, between the Tigris and Zab, south-west; and Karamless, at a distance inward from the Zab, south-east. From Koyunjik to Nimrud is about eighteen miles, from Khorsabad to Karamless the same, from Koyunjik to Khorsabad thirteen or fourteen miles, from Nimrud to Karamless fourteen miles.—*Bible Commentary.* See article and map of NINEVEH, Lesson III.

Authorized Version.

1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jo'nah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, go unto Nin'e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jo'nah arose, and went unto Nin'e-veh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nin'e-veh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

Revised Version.

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2 Arise, go unto Nin'e-veh, that great city, and 'preach unto it the preach-

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^aOf God; Gen. 20. 8; Psa. 24. 6; 80. 10.

¹Or, cry; see chap. 1, 2.—²Heb. a city great unto God.

I. JONAH'S REPENTANCE. Verses 1-4.

1, 2. The second time—Like St. Peter (John 21. 15-17), Jonah is not only forgiven, but restored to his office, and receives anew his commission.—*Perowne.*

God is long-suffering. He does not utterly reject him who has failed once, but rather gives him a new opportunity of correcting former faults.—*Burck.*

God's message must not be altered. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It must be given exactly as received. Therefore an inexpressible responsibility rests upon the Sunday-school teacher.

3. Arose, and went—Before, he arose and fled. He is still the same man. There is still the same energy and decision of character. But he is now "as ready to obey as before to disobey."—*Perowne.* So certain is he of his message, and so impressed with the urgency of his mission, that he immediately begins to enter the city, before obtaining a survey of it, and commences to preach on the first day's journey. His sermon is short but powerful: "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Forty days is here a round number, meaning after a short time, whose term Jonah measures by the period of the deluge.—*Kleinert.* **Exceeding great**—Literally, *great to God.* **Of three days' journey**—The most probable and most generally received opinion is that these words refer to the *circuit* of Nineveh, and that the writer intends by them to say that the city was so large, that it would take a man, walking at the usual pace, three days to go round it. This would give about sixty miles for its circumference.—*Cambridge Bible.*

Jonah has more followers in the way of flight than in the way of obedience.

The path of duty is the path of safety.

Neither sin's enormity nor sinner's rank should hinder fidelity. See ILLUSTRATIONS. One should never fear to do right, for the eternal God is on our side. No effort for righteousness was ever made in vain.

Authorised Version.

4 And Jo'nah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and 'he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'e-veh shall be overthrown.

5 So the people of ' Nin'e-veh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 For word came unto the king of

Revised Version.

4 city, of three days' journey. And Jo'nah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'e-veh shall

5 be overthrown. And the people of Nin'e-veh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even

6 to the least of them. 'And the tidings

* Deut. 18. 22. — * Matt. 12. 41, Luke 11. 22.

* Or, For word came unto the king, etc.

4. He cried, . . . Yet forty days—He threatens the overthrow of the city unconditionally. From the event, however, it is clear that the threat was to be understood with this condition, "unless ye shall in the meantime have amended your life and conduct." Comp. Jer. 18. 7, 8.—*Rosenmüller*. God's threatenings are always implied promises.—*Cambridge Bible*. The use of the participle, literally, *Yet forty days and Nineveh is overthrown*, is very forcible. To the prophet's eye, overlooking the short interval of forty days, Nineveh appears not a great city with walls and towers and palaces, and busy marts and crowded thoroughfares, but one vast mass of ruins.—*Perowne*. It may be asked whether the whole of Jonah's preaching to the Ninevites consisted of this one sentence incessantly repeated. The sacred text, taken simply as it stands, seems to imply that it did. We have, indeed, here the spectacle of an unknown Hebrew, in a prophet's austere and homely attire, passing through the splendid streets of the proudest town in the Eastern world.—*Kalisch*. To an Oriental mind (and Almighty God is wont to adapt his means to those whom they are to reach) the simple, oft-repeated announcement might be more startling than a labored address.—*Perowne*. Simplicity is always impressive. They were four words which God caused to be written on the wall amid Belshazzar's impious revelry: *Mene, mene, tekél, upharsin*. We all remember the touching history of Jesus the son of Anan, an unlettered rustic, who, four years before the war, when Jerusalem was in complete peace and affluence, burst in on the people at the feast of tabernacles with one oft-repeated cry, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice to Jerusalem and the temple, a voice to the bridegrooms and brides, a voice to the whole people;" how he went through all the lanes of the city repeating, day and night, this one cry; and when scourged until his bones were laid bare, echoed every lash with "Woe, woe to Jerusalem," and continued as his daily dirge, and his one response to daily good or ill treatment, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem." The magistrates, and even the cold Josephus, thought that there was something in it above nature.—*Pusey*.

"Now!" Speak promptly, and delay not. In God's kingdom every moment is precious. The time when he puts his word in thy mouth is the right time; not that which thou fanciest for thyself.—*Kleinert*.

II. NINEVEH'S REPENTANCE. Verses 5-9.

5. Believed God—Or, *believed in God*. Three things their faith certainly embraced. They believed in the God of the Hebrews as the true God. They believed in his power to execute the threat which he had held out. They believed in his mercy and willingness to forgive the penitent. And this was marvelous faith in heathen, contrasting favorably with that of the chosen people.—*Cambridge Bible*.

True repentance will always be evidenced by fruits. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It is, simply, the turning with revulsion of heart from one's evil ways, and is always acceptable to God. "To do so no more" is genuine repentance.

Social distinctions do not count before God. The king and the beggar must alike repent, or be punished.

6. For word came unto—Rather, *and the tidings reached*, as in the Revised Version. The tide of penitence and humiliation rose higher and higher, till it reached and included the king and his nobles, and what had been done by spontaneous action or local authority received the final sanction and imprimatur of the central government. Which ever view be adopted the

Authorized Version.

Nin'e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nin'e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water.

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto

Revised Version.

reached the king of Nin'e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with

7 sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he made proclamation and published through Nin'e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man

^a Job 2. 8.—^b 2 Chron. 20. 2; Joel 2. 15.—^c Said.—^d Great men.

^e Heb. said.

literal translation should be retained.—*Cambridge Bible.* He arose from his throne.—It is in favor of the view that the people did not wait for the royal edict to commence their fast, that the king himself seems to have been the subject of immediate and strong emotion, as soon as the tidings reached him. He first, as by a resistless impulse, humbled himself to the dust, and then took measures, out of the depth of his humiliation, that his subjects should be humbled with him.—*Perouze.* The thrones, or arm-chairs, supported by animals and human figures, resemble those of the ancient Egyptians, and of the monuments of Kouyunjik, Khorsabad, and Persepolis. They also remind us of the throne of Solomon, which had "stays" (or arms) on either side on the place of the seat, "and two lions stood by the stays; and twelve lions stood there, on the one side and on the other, upon the six steps." 1 Kings 10. 19, 20.—*Layard.*

7. The decree.—The word here used is not properly a Hebrew word. It occurs frequently in the Chaldee of Daniel and Ezra to denote a mandate or decree of the Babylonish and Persian monarchs. *Dr. Pusey* rightly sees in the employment of it here a proof of the "accuracy" of Jonah as a writer. And his nobles.—Literally, *his great men*, or grandees. Prov. 18. 16. We have a similar association of his nobles with himself by Darius the Mede, when he caused the stone which was laid upon the mouth of the den into which Daniel had been cast to be sealed "with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel." But it would be unsafe to infer from this passage that the nobles were in some manner constitutionally connected with the government of the kingdom, and thus tempered its arbitrariness, as we know now from the monuments, no less than from the records of history, that the Assyrian monarch was a thorough Eastern despot, unchecked by popular opinion, and having complete power over the lives and property of his subjects, rather adored as a god than feared as a man.—*Kalisch.* Saying.—The decree, thus introduced, extends to the end of verse 9.—*Cambridge Bible.* Neither man nor beast . . . taste any thing.—The brute creatures share in the evil effects of man's sin (chap. 4. 11; Rom. 8. 20, 22); so they here, according to Eastern custom, are made to share in man's outward indications of humiliation. The extension of the fast to all, and of the sackcloth to some at least, of the animals in Nineveh, is probably without exact parallel in extant history. But the description in the text is quite in keeping with the common instinct and practice of mankind. Men think it strange that the horses at Nineveh were covered with sackcloth, and forget how, at the funerals of the rich, black horses are chosen, and are clothed with black velvet.—*Pusey.* The description of the mourning here given is very affecting. That the irrational animals should be represented as partaking in it is far from unnatural.—*Henderson's Commentary.* In the extreme case of Nineveh the instinct may well have been indulged to an extreme.

We should seek the Lord earnestly. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Leaders in society and politics should be leaders in religion.

8. And cry mightily.—These words are to be restricted to "man." They do not include, as some have thought (comp. Joel 1. 18, 20), "beast" as well. The addition "mightily" favors the restriction, and so also does the exact order of the Hebrew: "Let them be clothed with sackcloth, man and beast (the parenthesis is inserted here as qualifying what precedes only), and let

Authorized Version.

God: yea, let them turn ^{every} one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Revised Version.

and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the

9 violence that is in their hands. Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

* Isa. 55. 6, 7.

them cry—and let them turn,” etc.—*Perrine*. Let them turn—The prominence of the moral element in the repentance of heathen Nineveh is very striking. Complete as was the outward act of humiliation, the king’s decree implies that it would be worthless without a corresponding moral reformation. The tenth verse tells us that it was to this that God had respect. The violence that is in their hands—“Violence” was their chief sin, as all we learn of the Assyrians, both from sacred and secular history, shows. Comp. Nah. 2. 11, 12; 3. 1, and Isa. 10. 13, 14.

9. God will turn—Literally, *the God*; that is, the one supreme God. This acknowledgment by the Assyrians of Jehovah, the God of the Jews, as “the God,” is all the more remarkable, because it is contrary to all else we know of them. The prophet Nahum declares distinctly, among other menaces pronounced against Nineveh, “Out of the house of thy gods will I cut off the graven image and the molten image.” 1. 14; comp. 3. 4. The Books of Kings state by name the Eastern idols, Nergal and Ashima, Nibhaz and Tartak, Adrammelech and Anammelech. 2 Kings 17. 30, 31. See also 2 Kings 18. 22, 30, 33, 34. All Assyrian monuments and records disclose this same vast pantheon of four thousand deities.

God’s “property is always to have mercy.” See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. GOD’S REPENTANCE. Verse 10.

10. And God saw their works—What works? Not sackcloth, not ashes, not fasting, for Jonah does not now mention these; but he had respect to their works, because they turned from their evil way.—*Calvin*. Dear brethren, sackcloth and fasting avail nothing, but repentance and good works.—*Talmud*. Works meet for repentance will infallibly secure the reversal of threatened and impending doom. God’s immutability is that of principle—not of plan and action. He immutably hates and punishes sin; hence, when a sinner becomes a penitent, God turns from threatened vengeance to free pardon.—*Cowles*. To what extent the repentance of the Ninevites was genuine in its character, and how long the reformation of manners here specified lasted, we are not informed; but there is reason to fear it was of short continuance, for after their city had been besieged for three years by Arbaces the Mede, it was taken and destroyed. Thus fell the ancient Assyrian dynasty, and gave place to that of the Medes, which continued till the time of Cyaxares, when Nineveh, which had been rebuilt, was again destroyed, and finally ceased to be an imperial residence.—*Barrows*.

Greater sinners than the Ninevites. That Nineveh was converted was a wonder. With us it is a wonder if we are not converted.—*Kleinert*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

God’s message must not be altered. Ver. 2.—Said Robert Morris to Dr. Rush: “I like that preaching best which drives a man into the corner of his pew, and makes him think the devil is after him.”

In 1670 Bourdaloue preached before his sovereign. Having described a sinner of the first magnitude, he turned to Louis XIV., and in a voice of thunder cried: “Thou art the man!” After the sermon he fell at the feet of the king, saying, “Behold one of thy most devoted servants, but in the pulpit he owns no other master than the King of kings.”

Paint Jesus Christ upon your canvas, and then hold him up to the people; but so hold him up that not even your little finger can be seen.—*Dr. Payson.*

Neither sin's enormity nor sinner's rank should hinder fidelity. Ver. 3.—A dying nobleman once sent for his pastor and said to him: "Do you not know that my life has been licentious, and that I have violated the commandments of God? Yet *you never warned me of my danger!*" The clergyman replied: "Yes, my lord, your life was not unknown to me, but fear of offending you deterred me from reproving you." "How cruel!" said the dying man. "The provision I made for you and your family ought to have insured fidelity. You have neglected duty, and now my soul will be lost!"

The Rev. J. Howe, once conversing with a nobleman who swore profanely in conversation, expressed great satisfaction in the thought that God governs the world, and will finally make a difference between him that sweareth and him that feareth to take an oath. His lordship answered, "I thank you, sir. I take your meaning, and shall make a good use of it."

True repentance will always be evidenced by fruits. Ver. 5.—Mr. Moody tells of having asked a soldier for the process of his conversion. His graphic answer was: "Halt!" "Attention!" "Right-about-face!" "March!"

A captain at sea perceives that the steersman is steering the ship direct for the rocks. How is the danger to be avoided? By scrubbing the decks, or setting the men to the pumps? No! These things are good enough, but if the ship is to be saved her course must be changed.

The moral of the Eastern tale is pertinent. Nourjahad delivers himself up to luxury and riot. He forgets there are distresses among his fellow creatures. He lives for himself till his heart becomes as hard as his coffers. At last he is awakened to penitence, and looks with shame on his past life. One thing remains within his power, and that he will do at once—expend his riches in relieving distress. Nor does he rest till he has found out and restored to prosperity every family in Ormuz whom calamity had overtaken.—*Jacoz.*

We should seek the Lord earnestly. Vers. 7, 8.—A terrible cyclone swept over a small city and carried death and destruction in its pathway. Scores were taken out of the wreck, bruised and dying. Among the number was a lady of great wealth, who saw that her race was run. She sent for a minister, and when he arrived cried out in agony of soul, "O, pray for my immortal soul!" As tender hands sought to relieve her bodily pain she said: "O, let my body alone! Pray that my soul may escape the awful doom I see before me."

A man said to me the other night in the inquiry room: "Mr. Moody, I wish you would tell me why I can't find the Lord." Said I: "I can tell you why you can't find the Lord." "Why is it?" "Why you haven't sought him with all your heart. The Scripture tells me, 'Ye shall find me when ye seek for me with *all your heart.*'"—*Moody.*

Every human being has something very precious in his custody—*his own soul.* You will lose it, unless you are deeply in earnest. The miners in the gold fields of Australia when they have gathered a large quantity of the dust make for the city. The mine is far in the interior of the country, wild, and infested with robbers. The miners keep the road, march in company, and keep close to the guard sent to protect them. Where great treasures are at stake we can run no risk.—*Arnold.*

Bunyan represented Pilgrim as putting his fingers in his ears, and crying at the top of his voice: "Life! eternal life!" as he fled from the City of Destruction.

God's "property is always to have mercy." Ver. 9.—He pardons like a mother who kisses the offense into everlasting forgetfulness.—*Beecher.*

Lincoln's door-keeper had standing orders from him that no matter how great might be the throng or what senators had to wait or be turned away without an audience, *he must see before the day closed every messenger who came to him with a petition for the saving of life.*—*Little.*

A Welsh minister, speaking of the burial of Moses, said: "In that burial not only was the body buried, but also the grave and the grave-yard. This is how God's mercy buries our sins."

"God is love" is the motto on the weathercock of a country friend. He was asked if he meant to imply that the love of God was as fickle as the wind. "No," he said, "I mean that whichever way the wind blows God is love."—*Spurgeon.*

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **The Preacher.** Notice this man who was chosen to deliver God's message. 1.) A *man*: God speaks to men through men, not through angels. 2.) A *forgiven sinner*: Jonah had tasted of both the divine anger and the divine forgiveness. His experience fitted him for his mission. 3.) A *called man*: "God had chosen him, trained him, called him to his work." Such are the men whom God sends forth to be his preachers.

2. **The Place.** Draw a map of Nineveh, showing the four cities which were united in its walls. Show a picture of its palaces or sculptures, if one can be obtained. Tell a little of its story, and state the character of its people. Nineveh represents a world in sin, to which God sends the message of warning and of mercy.

3. **The Preaching.** Notice: 1.) Its directness; no conciliatory words, no compromise with sin. 2.) Its sternness; no promise extended, simply warning of wrath to come. How much loftier are our privileges in receiving the good news of redemption.

4. **The Penitence.** Observe the elements of a true repentance. 1.) Believing the word. 2.) Confession of sin. 3.) Turning from sin. 4.) Seeking the Lord. In every revival of religion and in every conversion these elements may be noticed.

5. **The Pardon.** God had made no promise of mercy to this people, yet he saw their repentance. When men repent of sin, then God repents of his wrath. God never rejects those who cast themselves upon his mercy. Nineveh was a monument of divine grace.

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2. **TO SERMONS AND ADDRESSES.**—*The Knell of Nineveh*, by TALMAGE. *The Crisis*, DAVIS. *The Greater than Jonas*, MELVILLE, ii, 412. *The History of Jonah*, JOHN FOSTER, i, 185. *Works Meet for Repentance*, BECKHER. *Mistakes Concerning Repentance*, HOBART, iv, 91. *Repentance a Preliminary Condition of Salvation*, W. TAYLOR, i, 71, 91.

LESSON V.—May 3.

ISRAEL OFTEN REPROVED.—Amos 4. 4-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.—Prov. 29. 1.

THE PROPHET AMOS AND THE TIME OF HIS PROPHECY.—The home of Amos was in Tekoa, in the country of Judah, and he was a shepherd whom Jehovah called to prophesy concerning Israel. He seems to have prophesied during the contemporary reigns of Jeroboam II. and Uzziah; but his prophetic life was of short duration. He was a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea, but was younger than Joel, of whose prophecies commentators believe he made much use. At the time that Amos was sent into Israel to prophesy that kingdom was in the zenith of its power, as the conquests of Jeroboam over the neighboring nations had

restored it to its ancient limits. But with prosperity came corruption, and, as *Dr. Milman* observes, "When the consequences of these victories were not a holier worship, purer morals, national virtue, but pride and luxury in ivory palaces, oppression of the poor, unlawful sacrifices at Gilgal and Beth-el, and foreign idolatries of Moloch and Chemosh, the honest prophet set his face against ungrateful Israel, and uttered its impending doom." The Book of Amos consists of nine chapters, beginning with a prophetic denunciation of Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, and other heathen nations, on account of their cruelty in the oppression of Israel. Next, Judah is denounced for its contempt of the divine law; and then Israel is addressed in a similar manner. "The thunder-storm," as *Ruckert* poetically expresses it, "rolls over all the surrounding kingdoms, touches Judah in its progress, and at length settles down upon Israel."—*Willson*.

Authorized Version.

4 Come 'to Beth'-el, and transgress; at Gil'gal 'multiply transgression; and 'bring your sacrifices every morning, and 'your tithes after 'three years:

5 And 'offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the 'free offerings: for 'this liketh you, O ye children of Is'-ra-el, saith the Lord God.

Revised Version.

4 Come to Beth'-el, and transgress; to Gil'gal, and multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes every three days; 5 and 'offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim free-will offerings and publish them: for this liketh you, O ye children of Is'-ra-el, saith the Lord God.

¹ Ezek. 20. 29.—² Hos. 4. 15.—³ Num. 28. 3, 4.—⁴ Three years of days; Deut. 14. 28.—⁵ Offer by burning; Lev. 7. 12.—⁶ Deut. 12. 6.—⁷ So ye love.

¹ Heb. offer by burning.

I. TRANSGRESSION. Verses 4, 5.

4. Come to Beth-el, and transgress—This refers to the golden calves, which were the source of all "the transgressions of Israel" (1 Kings 12. 32; 13. 2), though Israel thought that by them their transgressions were atoned for and God's favor secured.—*Fausset*. "You will not arrest God's judgment by your idolatrous worship, eagerly as you may pursue that worship. Such eagerness is only an enlargement of your sin." This thought is expressed in a manner bitterly ironical by a summons to greater zeal. Gilgal was, like Beth-el, a seat of idol-worship. See Hos. 4. 15; 9. 15; 12. 11.—*Schmoller*. Bring your sacrifices every morning—As commanded in the law. Num. 28. 3, 4. They imitated the letter, while violating by calf-worship the spirit, of the Jerusalem temple-worship. After three years—Every third year. The Israelites here also kept to the letter of the law in bringing in the tithes of their increase every third year. Deut. 14. 28; 26. 12.—*Fausset*. The subject of the calf-worship is treated at greater length in Lesson II, First Quarter.

5. Offer—Literally, burn incense; that is, "offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with burnt incense, and with leavened bread." The frankincense was laid on the meat-offering, and taken by the priest from it to burn on the altar. Lev. 2. 1, 2, 8-11. Though unleavened cakes were to accompany the peace-offering sacrifice of animals, leavened bread was also commanded (Lev. 7. 12, 13), but not as a "meat-offering." Lev. 2. 11.—*Bible Commentary*. Publish the free offerings, etc.—The profuseness of idolaters in the service of their false gods may shame our strait-handedness in the service of the true and living God.—*M. Henry*. To the same effect they have just been told instead of being content with unleavened cakes to offer also upon the altar even the leavened loaves, which were not required by law to be consumed. Lev. 7. 13, 14. And so with the free-will offerings. Instead of leaving these to spontaneous impulses, they in their exaggerated zeal called out for them, published them.—*Schmoller*. This liketh you—That is, this is what ye like.—*Fausset*.

God's mercy is often forgotten and abused. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Shrink not from making personal application of this truth. How often have your scholars forgotten and abused it!

Mere zeal cannot atone for wrong-doing. Nobody to-day is more zealous than were the old Pharisees whom Christ cursed. God demands purity of heart in his worshippers. The "form of godliness without the power" is hateful to him. Have we both?

Authorized Version.

6 And I also have given *you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: *yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

7 And also I have withholden the rain from you, when *there were* yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.

8 So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

9 I *have smitten you with blasting and mildew: *when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig-trees and your olive-trees increased, the palmer-worm

Revised Version.

6 And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

7 And I also have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece

8 whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, and were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto

9 me, saith the LORD. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: the multitude of your gardens and your vineyards and your fig-trees and your

*1 Kings 17. 1.—2 Jer. 5. 3; Hag. 2. 17.—7 Dent. 28. 22.—
d Or, the multitude of your gardens, etc.; did the palmer-worm,
etc.

II. DISCIPLINE. Verses 6-11.

6. From this verse to the eleventh, inclusive, Jehovah describes the different corrective measures which he had employed for the purpose of effecting a change in the Israelites, and at the close of each mentioned in the series the obstinate impenitence, under the influence of which they persisted in their wicked courses, is emphatically marked by the declaration **yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord**. Such repetition gives great force to the reprehension.—*Henderson*. **Cleanness of teeth**—Explained by the parallel, **want of bread**. The famine alluded to is that mentioned in 2 Kings 8. 1.—*Grotius*. Where there is no food to masticate the teeth are free from uncleanness, but it is the cleanness of want. Comp. Prov. 14. 4, "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean." So spiritually, where all is outwardly smooth and clean, it is often because there is no solid religion. Better fightings and fears, with real piety, than peace and respectable decorum without spiritual life.—*Fausset*.

God sends calamities as angels to beckon us heavenward. See ILLUSTRATIONS. There are no "accidents" or "chances" in life. All our experiences God controls, and all that God sends us is "in mercy given."

Man has the power to reject all divine mercies and warnings. Vers. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11. "To deny the freedom of evil," says *Froude*, "is to make morality impossible."

7. **Withholden the rain . . . three months to the harvest**—The time when rain was most needed, and when usually "the latter rain" fell; namely, in spring, the latter half of February, and the whole of March and April. Hos. 6. 3; Joel 2. 23. The drought meant is mentioned 1 Kings 17. 1.—*Grotius*. **Rain upon one city, . . . not . . . upon another**—Any rain that fell was only partial.—*Fausset*. This "withholding" is utterly ruinous to the hopes of the farmer. A little earlier or a little later would not be so fatal, but drought **three months before harvest** is entirely destructive.—*Thomson*.

8. **Three cities wandered**—That is, the inhabitants of three cities. Comp. Jer. 14. 1-6. *Grotius* explains this verse, and verse 7, "The rain fell on neighboring countries, but not on Israel," which marked the drought to be not accidental, but the special judgment of God.—*Fausset*. The Israelites were obliged to leave their cities and homes to seek water at a distance.—*Calvin*.

Sin and satisfaction do not go together. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The human soul needs God, and even if all temporal good were secured, it would still starve without him.

9. **Blasting**—The blighting influence of the east wind on the corn. Gen. 41. 6.—*Fausset*. **Palmer-worm**—A species of locust is here meant, hurtful to fruits of trees, not to herbage or corn.

Authorized Version.

devoured *them*: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

10 I have sent among you the pestilence *after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

11 I have overthrown *some* of you as God overthrew *Sod'om and Go'mor-rah, and ye were as a fire-brand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

Revised Version.

olive-trees hath the palmer-worm devoured: yet have ye not returned

10 unto me, saith the LORD. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have carried away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camp to come up even into your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the

11 LORD. I have overthrown *some* among you, as when God overthrew Sod'om and Go'mor-rah, and ye were as a brand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me,

*Or, in the way.—^aWith the captivity of your horses; 2 Kings 12. 1.—^bIsa. 12. 19.—^cZech. 3. 2.

^dHeb. with the captivity of your horses.

The same east wind which brought the drought, blasting, and mildew, brought also the locusts into Judea.—*Bochart*. Of what avail are judgments? Men now are as little influenced by them as Israel of old. They do not believe they are punishments, much less that they are sent for the cause assigned. They deem them accidental, or else invent other cause for droughts, floods, hail, caterpillars, etc., in the face of the Scripture which expressly attributes such plagues to God.—*Wurt. Bibel*. Ordinarily, God makes his sun to arise upon the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, but he does not enslave himself to his own laws. There are variations, and in his word he reveals to us the meaning of his daily variations in the workings of nature.—*Pusey*.

10. Pestilence after the manner of Egypt—Such as I formerly sent on the Egyptians. Exod. 9. 3, etc.; 8, etc.; 12. 29; Deut. 28. 27, 60. Compare the same phrase, Isa. 10. 24.—*Fausset*. Though the plague has from time immemorial been epidemic in Egypt, and might so far be described as *the way of Egypt*, yet, comparing Isa. 10. 26, in which the same phrase is used as here, it obviously means, as *the Egyptians were treated*, or, as God punished them with the plague.—*Barrows*. Stink of your camps—That is, of your slain men. Comp. Isa. 34. 8; Joel 2. 20.—*Bible Commentary*.

11. I have overthrown—The earthquake is reserved to the last as the most special visitation. It is at all times the more terrible, because unseen, unannounced, instantaneous, complete. The ground under a man's feet seems no longer secure, his shelter is his destruction; men's houses become their graves. The earthquake at once buries, it may be, thousands, each stiffened (if it were so) in that, his last deed of evil; each household with its own form of evil, each in its separate vault, dead, dying, crushed, imprisoned.—*Lange*. Some of you—Some parts of your territory.—*Bible Commentary*. As a fire-brand plucked out of the burning—Comp. Isa. 7. 4; Zech. 8. 2. The phrase is proverbial for a narrow escape from utter extinction. Though Israel revived as a nation under Jeroboam II., it was but for a time, and that after an almost utter destruction previously. 2 Kings 14. 28.—*Fausset*. To what physical phenomena reference is here made it is impossible to determine, owing to the absence of all historical data. Some think the earthquake mentioned in chapter 1. 2, is intended; but this is altogether out of the question, since the prophecy was delivered two years before that event. From the allusion to fire it has been deemed probable that some of the cities of the Israelites had been burnt, either by lightning from heaven, or by the army of the king of Syria. At all events, that the language is not to be understood figuratively is evident from the close connection of the verse with those preceding, each of which describes a separate physical calamity, and closes, as this one does, with a reprehension of the impenitence by which the nation continued to be characterized.—*Henderson's Commentary*. The comparison of the doom of Ephraim to that of Sodom and Gomorrah is a general indication of the greatness of their punishment. Comp. Isa. 1. 9. The way in which the destruction of the cities of the plain is spoken of plainly refers to Gen. 19. 29, where occurs the word "overthrow," which became the standing phrase to describe this fearful fate. Deut. 29. 23; Isa. 1. 7; 13. 19; Jer. 49. 18; 50. 40.—*Baur*.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Is'ra-el: <i>and</i> because I will do this unto thee, ¹⁰ prepare to meet thy God, O Is'ra-el.	12 saith the LORD. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Is'ra-el: <i>and</i> because I will do this unto thee, prepare to
13 For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the "wind," ¹¹ and declareth unto man what <i>is</i> his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, ¹² and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, ¹³ The LORD, The God of hosts, <i>is</i> his name.	13 meet thy God, O Is'ra-el. For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what <i>is</i> his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth; the LORD, the God of hosts, <i>is</i> his name.

¹⁰ Ezek. 13. 5.—¹¹ Or, spirit.—¹² Psal. 139. 2; Dan. 2. 28.—¹³ Deut. 32. 13.—¹⁴ Isa. 47. 4.

III. WARNING. Verses 12, 13.

12. Therefore—As all chastisements have failed to make thee return to me.—*Bible Commentary.* Thus will I do unto thee—God, having said this, is silent as to what he will do; that so Israel, hanging in suspense, as having before him each sort of punishment, which are the more terrible because he imagines them one by one, may indeed repent, that God inflict not what he threatens.—*Jerome.* All the means that had been employed to reform the Israelites having proved ineffectual, they are here summoned to prepare for the final judgment, which was to put an end to their national existence. Comp. Ezek. 22. 14; Heb. 10. 81. Individuals might by repentance obtain the forgiveness of their personal transgressions, and thus have their minds brought into a state in which they would enjoy support and comfort in the midst of national calamity; but this was all that could now be expected.—*Henderson's Commentary.* **Prepare to meet thy God**—To give full effect to this call, one of the most sublime and magnificent descriptions of Jehovah to be met with in Scripture is introduced in verse 13. The participial form of the five verbs employed by the prophet greatly enhances the beauty of the passage; but it cannot be successfully imitated in a translation.

Prepare to meet thy God. He who writes these notes must meet God, and he who reads them.

Each of the interesting youth to whom it is taught must meet him. "How careful then ought I to live!" Point to the Saviour as the way of preparation.

Obstinacy of sin shows wickedness of heart. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Character tends to final permanence. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

13. Wind—Not as margin, "spirit." The God with whom thou hast to do is the omnipotent Maker of things *seen*, such as the stupendous mountains, and of things *too subtle to be seen*, though of powerful agency, as the "wind."—*Fausset.* He that maketh the aurora and the darkness.—*Kennicott.* **Declareth unto man . . . his thought**—Psal. 139. 2. Ye think that your secret thoughts escape my cognizance, but I am the Searcher of hearts.—*Bible Commentary.* **Maketh the morning darkness.**—Chaps. 5. 8; 8. 9. Both literally, turning the sunshine into darkness, and, figuratively, turning the prosperity of the ungodly into sudden adversity. Jehovah appears as one who towers above all created existences, who rules the highest spheres of might, against whom, therefore, nothing can avail, around whom every thing stands ready to execute his will. He is not the national God of Israel alone, but the God of the world. National calamities, according to our chapter, are to be viewed as chastisements from God. This view does not conflict with the existence of natural causes, but recognizes God as the Being in whose service these act. It sees in the course of the world not the blind mechanism of a clock, but the work of a personal intelligent will.—*Schmoller.*

If God be such a God as he is described here to be, it is folly to contend with him, and our duty and interest to make our peace with him; it is good having him our friend, and bad having him our enemy.—*M. Henry.*

There is danger of missing Mercy's last offer. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It is a solemn thing to say *To-morrow* when God says *To-day*, for man's to-morrow and God's to-day never meet. It is a man's own choice that fixes his doom.—*Mathieson.*

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

God's mercy is oft forgotten and abused. Vers. 4, 5.—A farmer returning from church, where he had heard the text, "The ox knoweth his owner," etc., went into his farm-yard, when a favorite cow came toward him to lick his hand; and the farmer, who had been hitherto quite an ungodly man, burst into tears as he thought, "Why, that's it! That poor creature knows me and is grateful to me, and yet I have never thought of, nor been grateful to, God."

Mr. Henry D. Gough, a Maryland planter, was riding to one of his plantations under a state of religious awakening. He heard the voice of prayer in a cabin, and, listening, discovered that a Negro from a neighboring estate was leading the devotion of his own slaves, and *offering fervent thanksgivings*. His heart was touched, and he exclaimed, "Alas, O Lord! I have my tens of thousands, and yet I never thank thee as this poor slave does who has scarcely food to eat or clothes to wear."—*Stevens*.

Some men treat the God of their fathers as they treat their father's friend. They do not deny him. By no means; they only deny themselves to him, when he is good enough to call upon them.—*J. C. and A. W. Hare*.

Afflictions are not accidental. Ver. 6.—It is not so much for the present life that we are called to bear the discipline of suffering as for a future state. While a man is stringing a harp he tries the strings, not for the music, but for preparation. When it is finished he draws out its full harmonies. God is ever fashioning the heart for future and eternal joys.

If Joseph had not been Egypt's prisoner he had never been Egypt's governor. The iron chains about his feet ushered in the golden chains about his neck.—*Secker*.

Obstinacy in sin shows wickedness of heart. Vers. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11.—Near by a mass of rock, which had some wild-flowers growing in its fissures and the deadly fox-glove in its top, we came upon an adder basking in the sunshine. At our approach the reptile uncoiled itself, and, raising its head with eyes like burning coals, it showed its venomous fangs and gave signs of battle. Attacked, it retreated and wormed itself into a hole at the side of the gray stone. Its home was there. Looking on that shattered rock fallen from its primeval elevation, with its flowery but fatal charms, the home of the adder, where nothing grew but poisoned beauty and nothing dwelt but a poisoned brood, it seemed an emblem of that heart which the word describes as a stone and the prophet pronounces desperately wicked.—*Guthrie*.

A gentleman once said to a wicked man, "You do not look as if you had prospered by your wickedness." "I have not," cried the man. "With half the energy I have spent I might have been a man of property and character. I am a homeless wretch, have been twice in State's prison, and made acquaintance with all sorts of miseries; but *my worst punishment is in being what I am.*"—*Christian Age*.

Sin and satisfaction do not go together. Ver. 8.—The world imitates the torture practiced upon the rebel, Hugh MacDonald, who was served with a plentiful meal of salt provisions, and when, parched with thirst, he entreated for water, was tantalized by a cup being let down to him in his dungeon, which, on lifting the cover, he found to be empty.

Tiberius was the absolute ruler of all that was fairest and richest in the kingdoms of the earth. There was no control to his power, no limit to his wealth, and no restraint upon his pleasures. His home was in one of the loveliest spots on the earth's surface, in one of the most softly delicious climates in the world. Pliny says he was confessedly the most gloomy of mankind. From this home of hidden infamies he wrote to his corrupted Senate, "What to write to you, or how to write, or what not to write, *may all the gods and goddesses destroy me worse than I feel they are daily destroying me*, if I know!"—*Furrr*.

Character tends to final permanence. Vers. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11.—At the mouth of the Mississippi how impossible would it be to stay the flow of its waters, and to separate from each other the drops of the various streams that have poured into it on either side—of the Red River, the Arkansas, the Ohio, and the Missouri—or to sift, grain by grain, the particles of sand that have been washed from the Alleghany or Rocky Mountains; yet how much more impossible would it be when character is the river and habits are the side-streams!—*Beecher*.

Sir Isaac Newton, when solicited to begin the use of tobacco, replied, "I make no necessities for myself."

While shaking hands with an old man one day we noticed that some of his fingers were bent quite inward, and he had not the power of straightening them. Alluding to this fact, he said, "In these crooked fingers there is a good text. For over fifty years I used to drive a stage, and these bent fingers show the effect of holding the reins for so many years."—*Christian Age*.

Did you ever watch a sculptor slowly fashioning a human countenance? It is not molded at once. It is painfully and laboriously wrought. A thousand blows rough-cast it. Ten thousand chisels polish and perfect it, put in the fine touches, and bring out the features and the expression. At last the full likeness stands fixed and unchanging in the solid marble. So does a man silently carve out his own moral image, till at length it wears the likeness of God or the image of a demon.—*Ozenden*.

There is danger of missing mercy's last offer. Ver. 12.—When the *Central America* hoisted signals of distress a ship came close to her. The captain asked, "What is amiss?" "We are going down; lie by till the morning." But the captain said, "Let me take your passengers now." "Lie by till the morning," was the message again. Once more the captain renewed his earnest entreaty, which was again refused. An hour and a half afterward the lights were missing, and she and all on board had gone down.—*Spurgeon*.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. Describe "the Indian summer of Israel" to which this lesson belongs, the age of Jeroboam II., the fourth king of the house of Jehu. Under him Syria was reconquered, and the northern boundary of Israel brought near the Euphrates. But it was an epoch of luxury, of idolatry, and of wickedness, bringing its sure result to the nation. It might be well to have the class learn the names of the five kings of this family—Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zechariah.

2. Give some account of the prophet Amos. 1) His *home*, Tekoa, in Judah, near Bethlehem. 2) His *station*, a farmer and herdsman, probably of humble origin; God's call lifts up the working-man above princes. 3) His *sphere of labor*, not Judah, but Israel, the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. 4) His *style*, full of illustrations, especially of life in the country.

3. Notice the *sins rebuked* in this lesson. These are declared in verses 4 and 5. Israel's great crime was the worship of idols. Jeroboam's sin (see Lesson II, First Quarter) brought forth its legitimate fruit. All Israel rushed into idolatry. Beth-el and Gilgal were idol-shrines. But our business to-day is with the idols which people worship to-day. What are they? How are they worshipped? Whatever stands between the soul and God is an idol, and must be put away.

4. Observe the *punishment* to which Israel had been subjected on account of its sin. 1) Famine, ver. 6; 2) drought, vers. 7, 8; 3) failure of harvest, ver. 9; 4) pestilence, ver. 1; 5) defeat in war, vers. 10, 11. All these were the result of natural law. But natural law is the divine method of dealing, for back of all law God is working. These are God's calls to the people to repentance and reformation. What are God's calls to men and nations now?

5. Call attention to the *warning*, verse 12, "Prepare to meet thy God." The misfortunes and trials of earth are disciplinary, but the punishment of sin will be hereafter. All souls must meet God. To some it will be a meeting of gladness; to others a meeting of terror. What will your meeting be?

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LESSON VI.—May 10.

ISRAEL'S OVERTHROW FORETOLD—Amos 8. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.—Luke 8. 18.

THE SURROUNDINGS OF THE LESSON are similar to those of Lesson V. The exact date cannot be given. Amos prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, King of Judah, and that of Jeroboam II., King of Israel. His plainness of speech gave great offense, and he was charged with conspiracy against the king. See chap. 7. 10.

Authorized Version.

1 Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me: and behold a basket of summer fruit.
2 And he said, A'mos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me,
1 The end is come upon my people of

Revised Version.

1 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: and behold, a basket of summer fruit.
2 fruit. And he said, A'mos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my

¹ Ezek. 7. 2.

I. ISRAEL'S WICKEDNESS. Verses 1-6.



1. **A basket of summer fruit**—The image of a people ripe for judgment.—*Schmoller*. Read the last chapter. This vision may be regarded as a continuation of the subject, in the development of which the prophet was interrupted by Amaziah.—*Henderson*.

All nature is a parable of divine truth. Centuries afterward the great Teacher used the most ordinary incidents of vegetable, animal, social, and political life as pegs on which to hang his lofty thoughts. Let us as teachers learn from the Lord and his prophets.

2. **Summer fruit**—The Hebrew word is *kits*; and in verse 2 the Hebrew word for "end" is *keets*. The similarity of sound implies that, as the *summer* is the *end* of the year, and the time of the ripeness of fruits, so Israel is *ripe* for her last punishment, ending her national existence. As the fruit is plucked when ripe from the tree, so Israel from her land.—*Fausset*. Heavenly influences can but injure the ripened sinner, as dew, rain, sun, but injure the ripened fruit.—*Henderson*. The end is come—Ezek. 7. 2, 6.

Opportunities of salvation do not last forever. God's mercy is infinite, but our life is mortal, and *now* is the only day of salvation. God is now looking down upon this world of busy human beings, and saying of some of them, as of the ancient Jews, "I will not again pass by them any more."

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
Is'ra-el; I will not again pass by them any more.	people Is'ra-el; I will not again pass
8 And the songs of temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: <i>there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.</i>	8 by them any more. And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord God: the dead bodies shall be many; in every place shall they cast them forth with
4 Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail.	4 silence. Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the
5 Saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and	5 poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we
a Shall howl.—b Be silent.—c Or, month.	d Or, palace.—e Or, <i>have the; cast them forth: be silent!</i>

All misery is the consequence of sin, though not always its direct punishment. Moral law is as immutable as physical law; and as one cannot step from the brink of a precipice into the vacant air without disaster, so one cannot turn in heart away from God without awful consequences.

Extreme iniquity draws down sentence upon itself. We cannot too frequently impress this truth on the hearts of our scholars. It is difficult to put eternal truth into plain language. We are apt to talk about God's judgments as we might talk about a man's whimsical decisions; but the laws of eternity are as inexorable as the laws of nature, and what we call punishment is only the consequence of sin. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

3. Songs of the temple—Chap. 5. 28. Not the temple of Judah, but the Beth-el "royal temple" (chap. 7. 18); for the allusion is to Israel, not Judah, throughout this chapter.—*Fausset*. Songs become howlings—wherefore? The answer follows: Because of the multitude of the dead. The Hebrew here has the exclamation *Hush!*—an admonition to bow beneath the tremendous severity of the divine judgment.—*Schmoller*. Just the reverse of this prophecy is promised to the godly: "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh." Luke 6. 21. With silence—Instead of the pathetic elegies loudly and continuously poured forth at princely funerals, nothing shall be heard but the frantic howl, announcing, but instantly checked in announcing, the greatness of the disaster. Into such howlings the joyous songs of the temple were to be converted. The dead bodies were to be cast forth indiscriminately, without any regard to the places where they might lie; and even this was not to be effected without exposing those who performed it to the attacks of the enemy. Hence, silence was to be enjoined.—*Barrows*.

Sin brings suffering upon the innocent. Doubtless many who sang in the temple and afterward walked there were sincere worshippers. Not all the dead that were buried in silence were wicked men. But the guidance of the nation had been relinquished to evil men, and their evil deeds brought evil consequences on the unaggressive righteous people who lived under their rule.

4. Hear—The nobles needed to be urged thus, as hating to hear reproof.—*Bible Commentary*. Swallow up the needy—Or, *gape after*; that is, pant for their goods; so the word is used in Job 7. 2, margin.—*Fausset*. To make the poor of the land to fail—They grasp all property for themselves. Comp. Job 22. 8; Isa. 5. 8.—*Schmoller*.

God enjoins care for the poor. If you are stingy and hard-hearted, God will punish you, and you need expect no more reward for what mean men call generosity than you expect for refraining from murder. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The selfish man is one of the worst of sinners. If you will take the trouble to make a list of the "woes" of the Bible, you will find that the greatest number of them, and the severest, are directed not against murderers, or adulterers, or drunkards, but against those who maintained the outward forms of religion while getting rich at the expense of the poor.

5. When will the new moon be gone—The Psalmist said, When shall I come and appear before God? These said, When will God's service be over that we may be our own masters again?—*Schmoller*. They cannot spare a single day, however sacred, from greedily pursuing their gain. They are strangers to God and enemies to themselves who love market days better than Sabbath days; and they who have lost piety will not long keep honesty. The new moon (Num.

Authorized Version.

*the sabbath, that we may ^aset forth wheat, making the ephah ^asmall, and the shekel great, and ^afalsifying the balances by deceit?

6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; *yea*, and sell the refuse of wheat?

7 The LORD hath sworn by ^athe excellency of Ja'cob, Surely ^aI will never forget any of their works.

Revised Version.

may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may ^aset forth wheat? making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for ^asilver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of ^athe wheat. The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Ja'cob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.

^a Neh. 12. 15.—^d Open.—^e Mic. 6. 10.—^f Perverting the balances of deceit; Hos. 12. 7.—^g Ps. 68. 24.—^h Hos. 5. 13; 9. 2.

ⁱ Heb. open.—^j See chap. 2. 6.

10. 10) and Sabbath were to be kept without working or trading. Neh. 10. 31.—*Fausset*. Set forth wheat—Literally, “open out” stores of wheat for sale. What Joseph did for the benefit of the poor, these did for their own advantage, making usurious gains from others' poverty. With this they united fraud, by diminishing the ephah and increasing the shekel—by demanding gold of greater weight than the right standard, and by falsifying the scales, using scales arranged so as to cheat.—*Schmoller*. Even the idolatrous Israelites still kept up the observance of the times and seasons appointed in the law of Moses. The “ephah” was a corn measure containing three *seahs*, and, according to Josephus, equal to the Attic *medimnus*, or somewhat above three English pecks. It is uncertain whether the word be originally Hebrew or whether it be Egyptian. It was originally any piece of metal weighed as an equivalent for what was bought; but came afterward to signify standard money, and differed in value, according as it was of silver or gold, and as it was estimated by the sacred or the royal standard. Exod. 30. 13; 2 Sam. 14. 26.—*Henderson*.

Business should be conducted on principles of strict honesty. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

God keeps no ledger account with his creatures. In the angels' recording book the bad deeds are not put down on one page and balanced every week by good deeds on the other, though something of that kind must be done if the Romish idea of supererogation were true. But if you swindle the poor, and make the measure small and the price great, it is of no use to try to square accounts with God by keeping the Sabbath. God does not keep his books that way.

“Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.” That was as true when Burns sang it as when Amos uttered the awful words of the fifth and sixth verses of our lesson, and it is as true to-day as ever. Men have improved in every thing else. They build better homes than they did in Amos's day; they have a truer estimate of the character of woman; they have abolished slavery, made juster laws, and established countless institutions of mercy; they have erected the noblest civilization the world ever saw; but men who “make haste to be rich” “swallow up the needy” in the nineteenth century after Christ just as they did in the eighth before him. But God is not mocked.

Sinful greed breaks God's Sabbath. The inordinate love of money, more than any other cause, has destroyed the sanctity of our Sabbath. Railroads, drinking saloons, excursion boats, and factories work on the seventh day simply because their managers are not satisfied with the gains of the six. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

6. Buy . . . sell.—Thus the poor man was made so poor that he was compelled to sell himself either for a piece of silver which he owed or for a pair of shoes which he had gotten and was unable to pay for. Thus he could not meet the smallest expenditure. To complete the evil case, only the refuse grain was sold to them, for which yet they had to pay the same as for good grain.—*Schmoller*.

II. ISRAEL'S OVERTHROW. Verses 7-14.

7. The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob—By himself, in whom Jacob's seed glory.—*Maurer*. By the spiritual privileges of Israel, their adoption as his peculiar people.—*Colein*. By the temple and its Shekinah, the symbol of his presence. Compare chap. 6. 8, where it means Jehovah's temple. Comp. chap. 4. 2.—*Fausset*. I will never forget—By leaving such sins unpunished he would deny his glory in Israel.—*Keil*. Woe, and a thousand woes, to that man that is cut off by an oath of God from all benefit by pardoning mercy!—*M. Henry*. The evil

Authorized Version.

8 Shall 'not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned,' as by the flood of E'gypt.

9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that 'I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:

10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lam-

Revised Version.

8 Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? yea, it shall rise up wholly like the River; and it shall be troubled and sink again, like the River of

9 E'gypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in

10 the clear day. And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your

* Hos. 4. 2.—7 Chap. 9. 5.—7 Job 8. 14; Isa. 12. 10; Jer. 15. 9; Mic. 2. 4.

deeds of the wicked are inscribed in a perpetual memorial before God; but the sins of believers are cast by him into the depths of the sea so that they never again come into mind. Mic. 7. 19.—*Schmoller*.

God never forgets. You have forgotten some of the good deeds of your life, and nearly all your bad deeds. God has kindly framed our memories so that "absence makes the heart grow fonder," and "distance lends enchantment to the view." We look back on the days of boyhood and girlhood with delight by systematically remembering our childish delights and forgetting our troubles. But "God never forgets any of our works." He never omits to see any, he never forgets any. "Thou, God, seest me" would be the most awful sentence ever penned or spoken if it were unaccompanied by the wonderful gospel revelation that "God is love." "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Nations and corporations, like individuals, have their day of reckoning with the Most High. Corporations have been wittily defined as bodies without souls. As they have no souls, they cannot be punished hereafter; but the God of justice brings them to account for their misdeeds sooner or later. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

8. Shall not the land tremble for this—Those who will not tremble and mourn as they ought for national sins shall be made to tremble and mourn for national judgments.—*M. Henry*. The guilt of the people was so enormous that it was sufficient to induce an entire subversion of the existing state of things. To express this more strongly, the land is metaphorically represented as rising and swelling like the Nile, and again falling like the same river. Of course, the idea of the heaving and subsiding of the ground during an earthquake is what is intended, as the beginning of the verse shows. For the sake of energy and impression the interrogative form is as frequently employed.—*Barrows*. A flood is the frequent image of overwhelming calamity. Dan. 9. 26.—*Fausset*. The flood of Egypt—The Nile, which annually submerges the Egyptian plain.

Individuals are responsible for national sins. "Shall not every one mourn for this?" inquires the prophet. And yet not every one had taken an active part in the transgression. But the man who tacitly permits evil is *particeps criminis*. Every man who has a vote is responsible to God for it. He cannot shirk his responsibility by staying away from the polls. Every evil that exists in our nation to-day is within the power of the voters. If drunkenness and liquor-selling are national sins, the Christians of the country must share the responsibility for them.

9. In that day—In the day of their judgment, in which what has just been mentioned is to take place. In close connection with the trembling of the earth is its becoming dark; the one is hardly conceivable without the other.—*Schmoller*. The sun to go down at noon—Sorrow is saddest when it comes upon fearless joy. God commonly in his mercy sends heralds of coming sorrow; very few griefs burst suddenly upon man. Now in the meridian brightness of the day of Israel, the blackness of night shall fall upon him.—*Fusey*. Some think the prophet here predicts the total eclipse of the sun, which took place at one of the great festivals in the year that Jeroboam died; but whatever there may be in the language borrowed from such an event, consistency of interpretation requires it to be taken metaphorically, as descriptive of a sudden change from circumstances of prosperity to those of adversity. Comp. Jer. 15. 9; Ezek. 32. 7-10.—*Henderson*.

10. Turn your feasts into mourning—As to the upright there ariseth light in the dark-

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
entation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; *and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.	songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day.
11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of *hearing the words of the Lord:	11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of

*Jer. 6. 26; Zech. 12. 10.—*1 Sam. 2. 1; Ps. 74. 9; Ezek. 7. 26.

ness which gives them the oil of joy for mourning, so on the wicked there falls in the midst of light darkness which turns their joy into heaviness.—*Schmoller*. **Songs into lamentation**—The Hebrew festivals were occasions of great joy, and were no doubt on this very account kept among the Ten Tribes after they had lost their religious importance. The calamitous result of the Assyrian invasion under Shalmaneser is here most graphically depicted. Comp. Isa. 15. 2; Jer. 48. 37; Ezek. 7. 18.—*Barrows*. **Baldness**—The shaving of a bald place was a sign of mourning.—Isa. 15. 2; Jer. 48. 37; Ezek. 7. 18.—*Fausset*. **Mourning of an only son**—The death of an only son was regarded by the Hebrews as the most mournful of events. Comp. Jer. 6. 26; Zech. 12. 10.—*Barrows*. **The end thereof as a bitter day**—There is no hope that when things are at the worst they will mend. No; the state of impenitent sinners grows worse and worse; and the last of all will be the worst of all.—*M. Henry*.

Sorrow comes from God's hand. Vers. 9 and 10. We say "The enemy invaded our country and made havoc;" "The drought has prevented good crops;" "The carelessness of some man has caused the dam to break and the waters to devastate the valley;" "The fault of the architect has caused the fire that has destroyed the village." But that is not the way that God talks. Notice how in this lesson he takes the responsibility: "I will not," ver. 2; "There shall be," ver. 3; "I will cause," ver. 9; "I will darken," ver. 9; "I will turn," ver. 10; "I will bring," ver. 10; "I will make it," ver. 10; "I will send," ver. 11; and so on throughout the entire prophecy. It is God who does these things. Armies, fires, earthquakes, and floods are in his hand like so many tools in the hand of a consummate artisan. He who makes even the wrath of man to praise him uses his blunders and misdeeds also.

Sorrow in this life is medicinal or surgical as well as punitive. Vers. 9 and 10. There is a sense in which the evil consequences of evil acts in this life are referred to as punishments. But they are punishments intended to lead to reform. Through all this sorrow the brightest outcome of the Hebrew race—the advent of the Messiah—was to be secured.

11. Famine . . . of hearing the words of the Lord—They should experience a total withdrawal of all prophetic communications. Comp. Ezek. 7. 26; Mic. 3. 7.—*Henderson*. A just retribution on those who now will not hear the Lord's prophets, but try to drive them away, as Amaziah did. Chap. 7. 12. They shall look in vain, in their distress, for divine counsel, such as the prophets now offer. Ezek. 7. 26; Mic. 3. 7. Compare the Jews' rejection of Messiah and their consequent rejection by him (Matt. 21. 43), and their desire for Messiah too late. Luke 17. 22; John 7. 34; 8. 21. It is remarkable, the Jews' religion is almost the only one that could be abolished against the will of the people themselves, on account of its being dependent on a particular place, namely, the temple. When that was destroyed the Mosaic ritual, which could not exist without it, necessarily ceased. Providence designed it, that, as the law gave way to the Gospel, so all men should perceive it was so, in spite of the Jews' obstinate rejection of the Gospel.—*Fausset*.

Of all famines, the famine of spiritual truth is the worst. No physical or intellectual hunger is as painful or as hurtful as unsatisfied famine for the words of the Lord. In death and dreariness, in exile from the land of their fathers, crushed by oppressors, hearing only of gods more cruel than those who make them, how will they hunger and thirst for any tidings of One who cares for the weary and heavy-laden; of One who would have man-servant and maid, the cattle and the stranger within the gates, to rest, as well as the prince; of One who had fixed the year of jubilee that the debtor might be released and the captive go free. O, what a longing in a land of bond-

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it.	12 hearing the words of the LORD. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst.
13 In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst.	13 it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst.
14 They that swear "by the sin of Sa-ma'ri-a, and say, Thy God, O Dan, liveth; and, The 'manner of Be'er-she'ba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.	14 They that swear by the sin of Sa-ma'ri'a, and say, As thy God, O Dan, liveth; and, As the 'way of Be'er-she'ba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.
¹¹ Deut. 9. 21.—/Way; Hos. 10. 13; Acts 9. 2; 18. 25; 19. 9; 24. 14.	Or, manner.

age to hear of such a Being; to believe that all that had been told them in former days was not a dream, to have a right to tell their children that it was true for them!—*Maurice*. Remember the parable of the Prodigal Son. Appeal to experience and observation of scholars. See ILLUSTRATIONS concerning "Scarcity of Bibles."

12. They shall wander from sea to sea—From the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean—from east to west.—*Fausset*. North . . . to the east—Or to the sunrise. Geographically we should have expected "from north to south." But so alienated was Israel from Judah that no one would think of repairing to Jerusalem for oracular information. But probably the cardinal points were not intended to be strictly marked; the prophet's object being to indicate generally the hopelessness of the attempts mentioned.—*Henderson*. Even the profane, when they see no help, will have recourse to God. Saul in his extremity inquired of the Lord, and he answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.—*Pusey*. Such is the present condition of the Jews. They roam in restless vagrancy about the world and seek the word of God; but they find it not, because they have killed the incarnate Word revealed in the written word.—*Jerome*.

14. Swear by—Worship. Psa. 63. 11. **The sin of Samaria**—That is, the golden calf at Beth-el. Deut. 9. 21; Hos. 4. 15. *Hitzig* thinks that Astarte is specifically meant; but the term was doubtless intended to comprehend the calf at Beth-el, the religious veneration of which led to the grosser forms of idolatry. At the same time, Astarte is spoken of (2 Kings 13. 6) in distinction from the worship specially instituted by Jeroboam. The god of Dan was the other golden calf, erected by Jeroboam in Dan. 1 Kings 12. 26-28.—*Barrows*. **The manner**—The mode of worship.—*Fausset*. **Liveth . . . liveth**—Rather, "May thy god . . . live!" Or, "As (surely as) thy god, O Dan, liveth!" This is their formula when they swear; not "May Jehovah live!" or "As Jehovah liveth!"—*Bible Commentary*. The swearing by these objects shows that the young men and maidens mentioned in verse 13 are worshippers of these idols and make pilgrimages to Beer-sheba.—*Schmoller*.

Confidence in false gods results in ruin. Wealth and Pleasure and Ambition, if we enshrine them in our hearts and dedicate to them our energies, will bring about our enslavement as surely as Baal and Astarte and Jeroboam's calf-idol ruined Israel.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Extreme iniquity draws down sentence upon itself. Ver. 2.—In 1572 intelligence reached Edinburgh that Coligni, Admiral of France, was murdered by the orders of Charles IX. He was Knox's old friend, and the shock was terrible. Then came news of the general massacre of French Protestants on the black day of St. Bartholomew. This produced the utmost horror in Scotland, and inflicted a deep wound on the exhausted spirit of John Knox. Having been conveyed to the pulpit, and summoning the remainder of his strength, he thundered, "The vengeance of Heaven against that murderer and traitor, the king of France." "Go!" he said, addressing Le Croc, the French ambassador, whom he saw in the crowd; "go, tell your master that sentence against him is pronounced, that divine vengeance will never more be lifted from his house, that

no son proceeding from his loins shall enjoy his kingdom in peace, and that his name shall be execrated to posterity."—*Dodge*. His prophecy was fulfilled.

God enjoins care for the poor. Ver. 4.—A rich youth in Rome had suffered from a dangerous illness. On recovering, his heart was filled with gratitude, and he exclaimed, "O Lord, could man recompense thee, how willingly would I give thee all my possessions!" Herman heard this and said, "All good gifts are from above; thou canst send nothing. Come, follow me." He took him to a wretched hut. The father lay on a bed of sickness; the mother wept; the children cried for bread. Herman said, "*See here an altar for the sacrifices*; these are the Lord's representatives." The youth assisted them bountifully.—*Krumphacher*.

Macaulay, in his essay on Milton, says: "Ariosto tells a story of a fairy who was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul snake. Those who injured her during the period of her disguise were forever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied her, she afterward revealed herself in her natural celestial form, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love and victorious in war." So what is done to Christ in his disguised form of the poor and sick of earth will be blessed by him.

A German baron's brother, finding him away from his castle and its life of ease engaged in taking care of the poor, exclaimed, "Alas! my brother, what are you doing? What distress compels you to this?" The brother said, "Distress compels me not, but the love of Christ, my Lord, constrains me to care for those so dear to him."

Sinful greed grudges and breaks God's Sabbath. Ver. 5.—When Sir Samuel Romilly, solicitor-general, committed suicide, Wilberforce said, "If he had suffered his mind to enjoy such occasional remission the strings of life would not have snapped from over-tension." The celebrated Castlereagh, who was foreign secretary in 1812, committed suicide in 1822. Wilberforce said, "Poor fellow! he was certainly deranged, the effect of continual wear of the mind and non-observance of the Sabbath."—*Gough*.

When Mr. Dod, a Puritan minister, preached against the profanation of the Sabbath by his wealthy parishioners, a nobleman's servant came to him and said, "Sir, you have offended my lord to-day." Mr. Dod replied, "I should not have offended your lord unless he had been conscious to himself that he had offended my Lord, and if your lord will offend my Lord, let him be offended."

A Syrian convert to Christianity was urged by his employer to work Sunday, but refused. His master said, "The Bible allows you to pull an ox out of a pit on the Sabbath." "Yes," said the convert, "but if the ox has a *habit of falling into the same pit every Sabbath day* the owner should either fill the pit or sell the ox."

A woman neglected to take her work home Saturday. On Sunday she told her niece to take it to the lady's house. "Put it under your shawl," she said, "and nobody will notice it." "But, aunty," said the child, "isn't it Sunday under my shawl?"

It is astonishing how soon the whole conscience begins to unravel if a single stitch drops; one single sin indulged in makes a hole you could put your head through.—*Buxton*.

Business should be conducted on principles of strict honesty. Vers. 5, 6.—Men write over their store door, "Business is business," and over their church door, "Religion is religion," and they say to religion, "Never come in here," and to business, "Never go in there." On Sunday they want sedatives, healing-balm, poetry, and the pure Gospel without any worldly intermixture. Next day they will take by the throat the first debtor whom they meet, and exclaim, "Pay me that thou owest; it is Monday." And when the minister ventures to hint about duty to fellow-men, they say, "O, you stick to your preaching." God's law is not allowed to go into the week. If the merchant spies it in the store he throws it over the counter. If the clerk sees it in the bank he kicks it out at the door. If it is found in the street the multitude pursue it, pelling it with stones as if it were a wolf escaped from a menagerie, and shouting, "Back with you! you have got out of Sunday."—*Becher*.

"Honesty is the best policy," but he who acts on that principle is not an honest man.—*Whately*.

Nations, like individuals, have their day of reckoning. Vers. 7-10.—In the very year (1807) in which this hateful commerce [the slave-trade] was abolished victory began to wait upon our arms, and there started that series of successes which gave peace to Europe and

which sent her oppressor to fret in exile through the remorseful years and in St. Helena's loneliness to slumber in a nameless grave.—*Punshon*.

A man goes into an inn, and, as soon as he sits down, he orders his wine, his dinner, his bed; there is no delicacy in season which he forgets to bespeak. He stops at the inn for some time. By and by the bill is forthcoming, and it takes him by surprise. "*Why, I never thought of that,*" he says. The landlord replies, "Here is a man who is either a born fool or a knave." Men must reap as they sow.—*Spurgeon*.

It is remarkable that there has never been such a thing as continuance of national infidelity in any country. Infidelity disintegrates all national character.

Scarcity of Bibles renders them highly prized. Vers. 11-14.—Just after the Revolution France showed such a dearth of Bibles that persons sent over for the purpose searched four days among the book-sellers of Paris without coming upon a single copy.

In the east of Iceland I fell in with a man who had sought in vain to obtain a Bible for seventeen years. His joy was inexpressible. I passed through a parish in which there were only two Bibles, and another in which there were none at all.—*Henderson*.

During the reign of James II. a Non-conformist copied out the whole Bible in shorthand for his own use, fearing its suppression.

Huguenot ladies, in times of persecution, hid their small Bibles in their high-dressed hair. They walked to church ten miles or more barefooted. Some slept in their wagons Saturday night to enjoy the privilege of hearing God's word read Sunday.

A traveler entering a cottage in Brazil saw a large Bible on the table. The owner said, "It was given me eight years ago and I am very fond of reading it, but the worst of it is it is scarcely ever at home. My neighbors love to read, and come from miles around to borrow it."

When the first load of Scriptures arrived in Wales in 1816 peasants crowded to meet it as the Israelites did the ark. Young people spent the whole night in reading it, and laborers carried it to the fields with them that they might enjoy it during the intervals of labor.—*Whitcross*.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **The connection.** The closing verses of the preceding chapter form a prelude to this lesson. The priest of the calf-temple in Beth-el accused Amos to King Jeroboam II. as a traitor, on account of his prophecy, that the king should die by the sword and the people should go into captivity. The idol-priest tried to drive Amos into exile, but received in return a fearful prediction of woe upon himself, his family, and his people; and then immediately follows the prophecy of the lesson.

2. **The emblem.** We often see at the funeral of an aged man a sheaf of wheat laid on the casket as an emblem of a life fully ripe and ready for the harvest. The prophet Amos sees a different symbol of Israel's condition, a basket of ripe fruit, signifying that the kingdom was ready to be plucked and gathered. He hears in his vision the wailing for the dead, and beholds corpses in multitude thrown forth in silence. All this is an image of the approaching overthrow of the kingdom and the destruction of the city. Vers. 1-8.

3. **The crimes of Israel.** Vers. 4-6. These are described in pictorial language. 1.) Covetousness (ver. 4), the inordinate desire for gain swallowing up the poor. 2.) Sabbath-breaking, by people who are so eager for trade that they cannot wait for the holy day to end, like those who keep their stores open on Sunday in our time, or who employ Sunday in writing up their accounts. 3.) Fraud, in selling grain to the poor, making the measure (ephah) small, while they add to the weight (shekel) by which the money is tested when paid. Note that in those times money was weighed, not counted. 4.) Slavery, selling and buying the poor who could not pay their debts. 5.) Oppression, wronging the poor by selling refuse and worthless wheat. The teacher can readily find illustrations of the same spirit in the present time.

4. **The woe.** Vers. 7-10. These verses graphically depict the woes that were destined to come upon the land as the result of its wickedness. The captivity of Israel and the destruction of Samaria were the final fulfillment. How far these are literal warnings of floods, earthquakes, eclipses of the sun, and natural phenomena it is impossible to tell. But they are also descriptive of afflictions to come upon the people as the result of their sins, and should be so applied by the teacher.

5. The famine. Vers. 11-14. This is expressly described, not as temporal, but as spiritual; a famine of the word of God, or, in other words, a religious decline. Those who neglect their spiritual nature and its needs find that it languishes. The soul suffers even more than the body when deprived of its needed food. How sad the condition of those who suddenly awake to their spiritual hunger and barrenness!

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LESSON VII.—May 17.

SIN THE CAUSE OF SORROW.—HOSEA 10. 1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.—
Isa. 59. 2.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—About 725 B. C. This prophecy was uttered between Shalmaneser's first and second invasions of Israel. Comp. ver. 14; also ver. 6, referring to King Hoshea's calling So of Egypt to his aid; also vers. 4, 18.—*Fausset*.

PLACE.—Hoshea's messages were probably all delivered in the kingdom of Israel.

THE PROPHET.—Hoshea prophesied during a long and eventful period, beginning in the days of Jeroboam II. of Israel, and concluding in the reign of Hezekiah of Judah—a round term of about sixty years. During his active life Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah reigned over Judah; and Jeroboam II., Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea over Israel. His prophecies, uttered on different occasions, were probably collected by himself toward the close of his career. It is not now possible to define the exact circumstances in which each was delivered, nor is the mark of distinction between separate prophecies always clear. In this chapter the prophet continues to charge the Israelites with idolatry, anarchy, and want of fidelity (1-4). He expatiates on the judgments that were to come upon them in punishment for these crimes (5-11); and then abruptly turns to them in a direct hortatory address, couched in metaphorical language borrowed from the mode of representation which he had just employed (12). The section concludes with an appeal to the experience which they had already had of the disastrous consequences of their wicked conduct.—*Henderson*. The prophets were the national poets of the chosen people, and annalists and historians, the outspoken patriots, the reformers of morals and pure religion, the preachers of righteousness and exponents of the law, and, most of all, the revealers of God's plan for our redemption through Jesus Christ.—*Bishop Hurst*.

Authorized Version.

1 Is-ra-el is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

2 Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

3 For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the LORD; what then should a king do to us?

4 They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus

Revised Version.

1 Is-ra-el is a luxuriant vine, which putteth forth his fruit: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath multiplied his altars; according to the goodness of his land they have

2 made goodly pillars. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found guilty: he shall smite their altars, he

3 shall spoil their pillars. Surely now shall they say, We have no king: for we fear not the LORD; and the 4 king, what can he do for us? They speak vain words, swearing falsely in

^a Or, a vine emptying the fruit which it giveth. —^b Statues, or, standing images. —^c Or, He hath divided their heart; 1 Kings 13. 31. —^d Behold.

¹ Or, prosperity. —² Or, obelisks. —³ Or, He hath divided their heart. —⁴ Or, smooth. —⁵ Or, obelisks. —⁶ Or, they swear falsely, they make covenants.

I. SIN. Verses 1-4.

I. Israel—The northern kingdom. An empty vine—A vine stripped of its fruits.—*Calvin*. See Nahum 2. 2. The nation was "empty" because compelled to pay tribute to Pul. 2 Kings 15. 20.—*Fausset*. But *Henderson* maintains that the Hebrew word here refers to luxuriance rather than to unfruitfulness. *Maurer* translates, "a wide-spreading vine." So also the Septuagint. Comp. Gen. 49. 22; Psa. 80. 9-11; Ezek. 17. 6. And the context seems to require this meaning. Bringeth forth fruit unto himself—Not unto Me. According to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars—In proportion to the abundance of the prosperity of the Israelites, which called for fruit unto God (comp. Rom. 6. 22), was the abundance of their idolatry. Chap. 8. 4, 11.—*Fausset*. An abuse of the prosperity which God had conferred.—*Barrows*.

Prosperity is not always best for us. Only God can certainly tell. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

How many of us bring forth fruit unto ourselves? How many have ever considered that we are like vines anyhow? A vine does not own itself. It is planted to bring forth fruit. Its fruit belongs to its planter. We have been put where we are because God saw that was the place where we could bring forth most fruit for his glory. He chose for us our family environments and business circumstances. He gave us power to bring forth fruit. Are we "empty vines?" or do we give to the world or Satan fruit that belongs to God?

2. Their heart is divided—1 Kings 18. 21; Matt. 6. 24; Jas. 4. 8. The state of the heart is the source of the evil.—*Schmoller*. They are insincere in Jehovah's service—professing to worship him, while they addict themselves to the worship of idols.—*Barrows*. Break down—The Hebrew term is properly a sacrificial one. It is here with much force applied to the destruction of the altars on which the animals themselves were offered.—*Henderson*. It might be translated "cut off," namely, the heads of the victims. Those altars which were the scene of cutting off the victims' heads shall be themselves cut off.—*Bible Commentary*.

Divided hearts cannot succeed. "Unstable as water, they shall not excel," said Jacob. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," said James. Want of success in secular life is often due to vacillation; and double-mindedness is always fatal to spiritual life. We cannot serve God and mammon. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

3. We have no king—Soon, deprived of their king, they shall be reduced to say, We have no king (vers. 7, 15), for Jehovah deprived us of him. What, then, seeing God is against us, should a king be able to do for us, if we had one?—*Fausset*. This is the language of desperation. Their king, to whom they had naturally looked for protection, was removed; they had forfeited the favor of God, who was now become their enemy; and, therefore, it was vain to expect help from an earthly monarch. The prophet probably refers to the time of anarchy during the interregnum between the murder of Pekah and the accession of Hoshea.—*Barrows*.

4. Words—Mere empty words. Swearing falsely in making a covenant—Breaking their engagement to Shalmaneser (2 Kings 17. 4), and making a covenant with So, though

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judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

5 The inhabitants of Sa-ma'ri-a shall fear because of ¹ the calves of Beth'-a'ven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and ² the priests thereof *that* rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

6 It shall be also carried unto As-syr'i-a for a present to ³ king Ja'reb: E'phra-im shall receive shame, and Is'-ra-el shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

7 *As for* Sa-ma'ri-a, her king is cut off as the foam upon ⁴ the water.

8 The high places also of A'ven, the ⁵ sin of Is'-ra-el, shall be destroyed: the

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making covenants: therefore judgment ¹ springeth up as ² hemlock in the 5 furrows of the field. The inhabitants of Sa-ma'ri-a shall be in terror for the calves of Beth'-a'ven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and ³ the priests thereof that rejoiced over it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it. It also shall be carried unto As-syr'i-a for a present to ⁴ king Ja'reb: E'phra-im shall receive shame, and Is'-ra-el shall be ashamed 7 of his own counsel. ⁵ *As for* Sa-ma'ri-a, her king is cut off, as ⁶ foam 8 upon the water. The high places also of A'ven, the sin of Is'-ra-el, shall

¹ 1 Kings 12. 26.—² Or, Chemarim.—³ Chap. 5. 12.—⁴ The face of the water.—⁵ Deut. 9. 21.

¹ Or, *shall spring up*.—² Heb. *rook*; see Deut. 29. 18.—³ Heb. *Chemarim*; see Kings 23. 5.—⁴ See chap. 5. 12.—⁵ Or, *Samarra is cut off with her king*.—⁶ Or, *foam*.

covenants with foreigners were forbidden.—*Fausset*. It is rather the making of covenants than the breaking of them to which the prophet refers as being criminal.—*Henderson*. Judgment springeth up as hemlock.—*Fausset* thus explains this figure: Divine judgment shall spring up as rank and as deadly as hemlock in the furrows. Deut. 29. 18; Amos 5. 7; 6. 12. But *Schmoller* takes another view. If justice prevailed the land would be like a well-appointed field, but it is now like one that is neglected, and in which, therefore, poison plants spring up, because justice was prostrated. By a somewhat bold figure, justice, when falsely administered, when perverted and abused, is compared to a poisonous plant. It has been changed into it, as it were. Comp. Amos 6. 12.

Truth is too sacred to be trifled with. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It is the safeguard of society.

II. SORROW.—Verses 5-15.

5. The calves of Beth-aven.—The prophet is thinking of all the calves in the northern kingdom which were imitations of the chief golden idol erected at Beth-el. By these imitations all Israel had become a Beth-aven, that is, "a house of idols."—*Wunsche*. In these verses (5, 6) the object of idolatrous worship is spoken of now in the plural, and now in the singular number, which *Hitzig* accounts for on the ground that, though the Israelites might have multiplied golden calves, that set up by Jeroboam would still be held in peculiar honor.—*Barrows*. Priests.—The Hebrew is only used of idolatrous priests (3 Kings 23. 5; Zeph. 1. 5), from a root meaning either the black garment in which they were attired, or *to resound*, referring to their howling ories in their sacred rites. Such would be the excitement of the idolatrous priests at the capture of their god, that they would leap about in a state of de-peration like the priests of Baal. 1 Kings 18. 26. The glory of the idol consisted in its ornaments.—*Henderson*.

Apostasy from God brings woe. Always, every-where. See ILLUSTRATIONS. "From the very gate of heaven there is a by-way to the pit."

6. It shall be also carried.—The calf, so far from saving its worshipers from deportation, shall itself be carried off; hence Israel shall be ashamed of it.—*Barrows*. King Jareb.—This is not a proper name, but signifies their Avenger. A present to the king whom they looked to as their defender or avenger, whose wrath they wished to appease, namely, Shalmaneser. The minor States applied this title to the great king—a sort of royal Lord Protector. Ephraim and Israel were interchangeably used to indicate the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. His own counsel.—The calves, which Jeroboam set up as a stroke of policy to detach Israel from Judah. Their severance from Judah and Jehovah proved now not to be politic, but fatal to them.—*Fausset*.

7, 8. Her king is cut off as the foam.—*Maurer* translates "a chip," that cannot resist the current. This image of a chip on the surface of the water—denoting untraceable disappearance, and probably violent destruction (*Schmoller*)—is very beautiful and forcible.—*Henderson*. As the foam though seeming to be eminent, raised on the top of the water, yet has no solidity, such is the

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thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they ⁴shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

9 O Is'ra-el, thou hast sinned from the days of Gib'e-ah: there they stood: the battle in Gib'e-ah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.

10 *It is in* ⁵my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, ⁶when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows.

11 And E'phra-im *is as* a heifer *that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn*; but I passed over upon ⁷her fair

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be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

9 O Is'ra-el, thou hast sinned ¹²from the days of Gib'e-ah: ¹³"there they stood"; ¹⁴that the battle against the children of iniquity should not overtake them

10 in Gib'e-ah. When it is my desire, I will chastise them; and the peoples shall be gathered against them, when they are ¹⁵"bound" to their two trans-

11 gressions. And E'phra-im is a heifer that is taught, that loveth to tread out *the corn*; but I have passed over

⁴ Rev. 6. 16.—⁵ Deut. 28. 62.—⁶ Or, when I shall bind them for their two transgressions, or, in their two habitations.—⁷ The beauty of her neck.

¹² Or, more than in the days.—¹³ Or, there have they continued.—¹⁴ Or, shall not the battle . . . Gibeah?—¹⁵ Or, yoked.—¹⁶ Or, for.

throne of Samaria.—*Fausset*. They shall say to the mountains—In the hopelessness of despair. They would rather be buried by the mountains than undergo the afflictions of such a time. Applied in Luke 23. 30 and Rev. 6. 16, as a type of the anguish of lost souls.—*Schmoller*. In the midst of the calamities that should come upon the people, death would be preferable to life. Comp. Rev. 6. 15, 16.—*Barrows*. Those very hills on which were their idolatrous altars, one source of their confidence, so far from helping them, shall be called on by them to overwhelm them.—*Fausset*.

No earthly power should be feared. Bad men in high positions and bad laws frequently terrify us, but there is no cause for terror. The greatest of men are like the foam on the top of the wave. Their power does not endure. Only God's power endures.

God is a very present help in time of trouble. Our prayer to Jesus, if offered in faith now, shall surely be heard; but prayer to the mountains shall be in vain.—*Fausset*.

9. That reference is here made to the transactions recorded Judg. 19. 20 there can be no doubt. The prophet declares that as a nation his people had all along, from the period referred to, evinced a disposition to act in the same rebellious and unjust manner as the Gibeonites had done. Comp. chap. 9. 9. The words there they stood, should be *there they remain*, that is, they persist in wickedness—a graphic expression of the character of the inhabitants in his day. These Gibeonites are still—he would say—what they have ever been, a wicked and abandoned people. They are singled out as a fit specimen of the whole nation; and are called children of iniquity, "*sons of wickedness*," to mark the enormity of their conduct.—*Henderson*. The battle . . . did not overtake them—Though God spared you then, he will not do so now; nay, the battle whereby God punished the Gibeonite "children of iniquity" shall the more heavily visit you for your continued impenitence. Though "they stood" then, it shall not be so now. The change from "thou" to "they" marks God's alienation from them; they are, by the use of the third person, put to a greater distance from God.—*Fausset*.

God expostulates and warns before punishing. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

10. My desire . . . chastise expresses God's strong inclination to vindicate his justice against sin, as being the infinitely holy God.—Deut. 28. 62. The people—foreign invaders—shall be gathered against them when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows—An image taken from two oxen plowing together side by side, in two contiguous furrows; so the Israelites shall join themselves, to unite their powers against all dangers, but it will not save them from my destroying them.—*Calvin*.

11. The general meaning of this verse seems to be, that the Ephraimites had been accustomed in the plenitude of their power to crush and oppress others, especially their brethren of Judah; but they were now themselves to be brought into subjection to the king of Assyria, by whom they should be placed in circumstances of great hardship in foreign countries. The metaphors are agricultural.—*Henderson*. Taught—That is, accustomed. Loveth to tread out the corn—A far easier and more self-indulgent work than plowing; in the treading corn cattle were

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
neck: I will make E'phra-im to ride; Ju'dah shall plow, and Ja'cob shall break his clods.	upon her fair neck: I will set a rider on E'phra-im; Ju'dah shall plow,
12 Sow 'to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.	12 Ja'cob shall break his clods. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and "rain righteousness upon you.
13 Ye 'have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.	13 righteousness upon you. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of "lies: for thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty
9 Prov. 11. 18.—10 Prov. 22. 8.	10 Or, teacheth you righteousness.—11 Or, faithlessness.

not bound together under a yoke, but either trod it singly with their feet, or drew a threatening sledge over it (Isa. 28. 27, 28); they were free to eat some of the corn, from time to time, as the law required they should be unmuzzled (Deut. 25. 4), so that they grew fat in this work. An image of Israel's freedom, prosperity, and self-indulgence heretofore. But now God will put the Assyrian yoke upon her, instead of freedom, putting her to servile work. *I passed over upon—I put the yoke upon.—Fausset.* *I will make Ephraim to ride—Rather, I will place a rider upon him—a conqueror, who shall lead him forth from his land.* Thus Calvin, Rosenmüller, Ewald, and others. The judgments of God were not, however, to be confined to the northern kingdom; the southern should also be involved in them. In short, they should overtake the whole posterity of Jacob. The prediction was fulfilled during the two captivities. —Barrows.

12. Sow . . . in righteousness—Continuation of the image in verse 11. Prov. 11. 18. Act righteously, and ye shall reap the reward; a reward not of debt, but of grace. In mercy—According to the measure of the divine "mercy," which over and above repays the goodness or mercy which we show to our fellow-men. Luke 6. 38.—*Fausset.* Break up your fallow ground—Let them cleanse their hearts from all corrupt affections and lusts, which are as weeds and thorns, and let them be humbled for their sins, and be of a broken and contrite spirit in the sense of them; let them be full of sorrow and shame at the remembrance of them, and prepare to receive the divine precepts, as the ground that is plowed is to receive the seed that it may take root. See Jer. 4. 8.—*Matthew Henry.* The Israelites had long neglected Jehovah: it was now high time to return to his fear; and though they might not meet with immediate tokens of his favor, they were to persevere in seeking him, in the assurance that he would be gracious to them. Such is the force of till. Righteousness—That is, the reward of righteousness—salvation, temporal and spiritual. 1 Sam. 26. 23; comp. Joel 2. 23.—*Fausset.*

Seeking the Lord, and finding him, are almost synonymous. No man ever earnestly and persistently tried to secure spiritual power, and failed.

The sooner we give ourselves to God the better. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

13. Ye have reaped iniquity—That is, the fruit of iniquity; as "righteousness" (ver. 12) is "the fruit of righteousness." Job 4. 8; Prov. 22. 8; Gal. 6. 7, 8.—*Fausset.* From wickedness there resulted wickedness.—*Schmoller.* Fruit of lies—The effects of false and hypocritical conduct in professing attachment to the true God while addicted to the worship of other deities. —Barrows. The result of this conduct is not profit, but disaster and ruin, for sin always deceives those who serve it.—*Schmoller.* Didst trust in thy way—In the worship of false gods. This was their internal safeguard, as their external was the multitude of their mighty men. *Fausset.*

Harvest follows seed-time in spiritual matters as really and constantly as in nature. He that sows wickedness shall harvest iniquity. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It is not possible to evade the eternal laws of God. Faith in Christ and the practice of virtue are the only means by which permanent happiness can be produced.

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14 Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled 'Beth'-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.

15 So shall Beth'-el do unto you because of 'your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Is'ra-el utterly be cut off.

Revised Version.

14 men. Therefore shall a tumult arise "among thy "people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth'-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces with her children. "20 So shall Beth'-el do unto you because of your great wickedness: at daybreak shall the king of Is'ra-el be utterly cut off.

2 Kings 18. 34.—4 The evil of your evil.

20 Or, against.—21 Heb. peoples.—22 Or, So shall it be done unto you at Beth'e.

14. **Tumult**—A tumultuous war. **Thy people**—Literally, *peoples*: the war shall extend to the whole people of Israel, through all the tribes and the people allied to her.—*Fausset*. As **Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel**—This fact is not known from history, and the explanation is therefore uncertain. Shalman is probably a contraction for Shalmaneser. *Furst* understands an older Assyrian king before Pul, since the name Shalmaneser never elsewhere appears shortened to Shalman, and the Assyrians never engaged in a destructive battle with Israel, and Shalmaneser destroyed Samaria forty years later. Beth-arbel, according to him, is Beth-arbel near Gargamela, made famous later by the victory of Alexander the Great. *Keil* supposes that the prophet, since the conquest of such a distant city would scarcely have been known to the Israelites, could not have held up the destruction of this city before them as an example, and would therefore understand the Arbela in Upper Galilee, between Sepphoris and Tiberias, mentioned in 1 Macc. 9. 2, and later by *Josephus*.—*Schmoller*. The abbreviation of proper names is not uncommon in the Scripture, as Coniah for Jehoiachin.—*Barrows*. Shalmaneser would seem to be a compound name, having the part here omitted in common with the names of three other Assyrian kings, Tiglath-pileser, Esar-haddon, and Shar-ezer.—*Fausset*. As the contemporaries of Hosea are supposed to have been acquainted with this now-forgotten battle, there is reason to believe that it took place on the invasion of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrian army.—*Barrows*.

15. **So shall Beth-el do unto you**—Your idolatrous calf at Beth-el shall be the cause of a like calamity befalling you.—*Fausset*. **In a morning**—The reference is to the suddenness with which Hoshea was to be seized by the king of Assyria, and an entire end put to the regal dignity. See 2 Kings 17. 4. The doing of any thing early or soon is frequently expressed by its being done at daybreak.—*Henderson*.

The exceeding sinfulness of sin. The Hebrew of the phrase in the fifteenth verse translated "your great wickedness" is the *evil of your evil*. The multitude of our transgressions we will never know till we count them by the light of the eternal throne.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Prosperity is not always best for us. Ver. 1.—It is one of the worst effects of prosperity to make a man a vortex instead of a fountain; so that instead of throwing out he only learns to draw in.—*Decher*.

The beginning of Nero's reign was marked by acts of the greatest kindness and condescension. The object of his administration seemed to be the good of his people. And when he was desired to sign his name to a list of malefactors that were to be executed he exclaimed, "*I wish to heaven I could not write!*" He was an enemy to flattery; and when the Senate had liberally commended the wisdom of his government he desired them to keep their praises till he deserved them. Yet this was the wretch who assassinated his mother, set fire to Rome, and throw the odium of that dreadful action upon the Christians. So with the Emperor Valerian, and many others, whom prosperity made corrupt.

Mr. Cecil had a hearer who, when a young man, had solicited his advice, but who had not for some time had an interview with him. Mr. Cecil went to his house on horseback, and, after salutation, said, "I understand you are very dangerously situated." His friend replied, "I am not aware of it, sir." "I thought it was probable you were not, and therefore I have called on you. *I hear you are getting rich*. Take care, for it is the road by which the devil leads thousands to destruction."

We cannot serve God and mammon. Ver. 2.—A teacher had been relating to his class the story of the rich man and Lazarus; when he asked, "Now, which would you rather be, boys, the rich man or Lazarus?" One boy replied, "I will be the rich man while I live, and Lazarus when I die." That is what multitudes are vainly trying to be. Such a choice indicates an evil heart. No man is morally safe while secularly successful who has not sought *first* the kingdom of God.

"I shall not attend Sabbath-school any more," said a young girl to one of her class. "Why not?" asked her friend. "Because my mother is going to send me to the dancing-school, and I think it very inconsistent to attend both at the same time."

An atheist being asked by a professor of Christianity how he could quiet his conscience in so desperate a state, replied, "As much am I astonished at yourself that, believing the Christian religion to be true, you can live so much like the world. Did I believe what you profess, *I should think no care, no zeal, enough.*"

Truth is too sacred to be trifled with. Ver. 4.—As Archbishop Leighton was traveling one day from Glasgow to Dunblane, in a storm of thunder and lightning, he overtook two men of bad character. They had not courage to rob him, but to extort money one said, "I will lie down by the road as if dead, and you tell the archbishop that I was killed by lightning, and beg money of him to bury me." The archbishop came up, gave the money, and proceeded on his journey. But when the man returned to his companion he found him lifeless, and cried out, "O, sir, he is dead!" The archbishop discovered the fraud, and said, "It is a dangerous thing to trifle with God."

I have just been down to the docks looking at the "life hooks." They are placed there to be used in saving people from drowning, *and for no other purpose*, under penalties. So truth must not be employed to serve wrong ends.

Apostasy from God brings woe. Vers. 5-8.—After poor Sabat, an Arabian who had professed faith in Christ by means of the labors of Rev. Henry Martyn, had apostatized from Christianity and written a book in favor of Mohammedanism, he was met at Malacca by Dr. Milne, in reply to whose pointed questions he said, "I am unhappy! I have a mountain of burning sand on my head. When I go about I know not what I am doing. It is indeed an evil and a bitter thing to forsake God."

In the long line of portraits of the doges in the palace at Venice one space is empty and the semblance of a black curtain remains as a melancholy record of glory forfeited. Found guilty of treason against the State, Marino Falieri was beheaded and his image blotted from remembrance. Every one's eye rests longer upon the one dark vacancy than upon any one of the fine portraits of the merchant monarchs. So great sin becomes conspicuous for severe retribution.—*Spurgeon.*

God expostulates and warns before punishing. Vers. 9-11.—The common notion about the spring of the serpent is mistaken. Those who have watched the creature say that it gradually uncoils itself before it makes its spring. So it is with most calamities. There is generally time to do something to avert them.—*Sir A. Helps.*

In every clock there is what clock-makers call the warning-pin, which gives notice before the clock strikes the hour.

As he (Cæsar) crossed the hall his statue fell and was shivered on the stones. Some servants perhaps had heard whispers and wished to warn him. As he still passed on a stranger thrust a scroll into his hands and begged him to read it on the spot. It contained a list of the conspirators, with a clear account of the plot. He supposed it to be a petition and placed it carelessly amongst his other papers. The fate of the empire hung upon that thread, but it was broken.—*Froude.*

Captain B., at Malta, saw a ship sailing out of the harbor. Soon he observed her suddenly tremble, and sink. She had struck on a rock, and so severe had been the shock that she instantly went down. It was the voice of God to his conscience. He fell upon his knees exclaiming: "Such will be the shipwreck of my soul, O Lord, if thou dost not undertake for me."

The sooner we give ourselves to God the better. Ver. 12.—I have during the past year received forty or fifty children into church membership. Out of a church of twenty-seven hundred members I have never had to exclude a single one who was received while yet a child.—*Spurgeon.*

Not an hour but is trembling with destinies; not a moment of which, once passed, the appointed work can ever be done again or the neglected blow struck on the cold iron.—*Ruskin.*

TEACHING HINTS.

1. Call attention to the times of Hosea. He was, probably, the successor of Amos as prophet in the northern kingdom, and therefore must have begun his ministry near the close of the reign of Jeroboam II., the great king of Israel's later annals. He lived in an age of confusion and frequent change. Jeroboam's son Zechariah (like Oliver Cromwell's son Richard), was slain after a six months' reign; Shallum, the usurper, held the throne only a month; Menahem, a soldier, seized the throne and reigned ten years with great cruelty. His son Pekahiah was dethroned by another soldier, Pekah, an able but unscrupulous ruler; and after him came Hoshea or Hosea, the last king of Samaria. During all these reigns the prophet Hosea was living. If the teacher will study the history of that troubled time, he will obtain a clearer understanding of Hosea's prophecy.

2. One cause of these frequent changes may be noted, namely, the foreign relations of Israel. With Judah on the south there was peace during most of the period; but Syria again arose from its subjection under Jeroboam II., and was a thorn in the side of Israel. The great peril, however, arose from Assyria, on the river Tigris, where Tiglath-pileser II., or Pul, Shalman, and Sargon reigned in succession. The growth of Assyria was the cloud overhanging Israel. There were two parties in Samaria, one counseling peace and submission to the Assyrian Empire, the other urging war and independence; and the strifes of these parties were the frequent cause of revolution.

3. But the great business of this prophet, as of all the prophets, was with the sins of Israel. The later prophets of Israel took but little interest in the policy of the court. They endeavored to bring the people into right relations with Jehovah. Notice the sins which are rebuked in this section:

1.) He rebukes the irreligious, godless spirit of the times. "Israel is a luxuriant vine" (R. V.); but "according to the multitude of his fruit he hath multiplied his altars." Ver. 1. Prosperity has not led its people to the Lord, but has caused them to forget him. Such is often the effect of worldly success at the present time.

2.) He rebukes the divided heart of his people. Ver. 2. They have been trying at once to serve God and the world.

3.) He complains of the prevalence of false swearing (ver. 4); referring both to perjury and profanity. Observe how abundant even now are all those forms of evil.

4. The lesson shows also the results of sin. The images shall be destroyed; the altars cut down; the people carried into captivity and given as slaves to the king of Assyria; ruin and desolation shall come to Samaria, the land shall mourn, and the population shall be destroyed. The next lesson will show how soon the prediction was fulfilled. It is as true now as ever that sin will bring woe upon the sinner.

5. There remains the tender exhortation of ver. 12, which would make a fitting close to the lesson. Even in the gloom of Israel's overthrow the prophet holds out a hope of Israel's salvation.

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LESSON VIII.—May 24.

CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.—2 KINGS 17. 6-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you.—
2 Chron. 34. 20.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—730 B. C.

PLACES.—1. The kingdom of Assyria, which at this time included Mesopotamia, Media, Elam, and Babylonia. 2. Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel. 3. Halah, the district which Ptolemy calls Chalcitis. It lies directly north from Thapsacus between Anthemusia and Gausonitis.—*Lewy*. 4. Habor—Here, in northern Assyria, there is a river which is called *Ahabur Chasavios* to distinguish it from the river *Chaboras* or *Chebar* in Mesopotamia. It still bears its ancient name.—*Aril*. Jewish tradition fixes this as Habor. This designates northern Assyria, and, in fact, the mountainous region, the district on the border between Assyria and Media, on the side toward Armenia, as the place of exile of the Ten Tribes. 5. The river of Goman is the Kisel-osen, which rises in the northern part of the Zagros range and flows into the Caspian Sea.—*Furd*. 6. The cities of the Medes—One of the Median cities to which exiles were taken appears, from Tobit i, 14, to have been Rages. It is interesting to note that in the long inscription [alluded to in our next paragraph] Sargon claims to have subjected Media to his sway.—*Terry*. There is still, however, among the best scholars, much uncertainty about the Israelites' place of exile.

PERSONS.—1. Hoshea, the last king of Israel. 2. The king of Assyria—From the context we would naturally infer that this Assyrian king was no other than Shalmaneser, mentioned in verse 3, but the Assyrian inscriptions show that it was Shalmaneser's successor, whose name, Sargon, occurs in Isa. 20. 1. This fact by no means conflicts with our historian, who simply calls the conqueror the king of Assyria. Comp. chap. 19. 10. In a long inscription discovered in the palace of Khorabad, and commonly called the "Acts of Sargon," occurs the following: "I besieged, took, and occupied the city of Samaria, and carried into captivity 27,290 of its inhabitants. I changed the former government of the country, and placed over it lieutenants of my own. And Sebeh, ruler of Egypt, came to Raphia [a city near the sea-coast south-west of Gaza] to fight against me; they met me and I routed them; Sebeh fled." This last statement gives support to the conjecture that it was some interference from the king of Egypt that enabled Samaria to hold out so long against the Assyrian armies. Sargon seems, therefore, to have been a usurper, who gained possession of the throne of Assyria during Shalmaneser's prolonged absence at the siege of Samaria.—*Terry*.

Authorized Version.

6 In ¹the ninth year of Ho-sh'e-a the king of As-syr'i-a took Sa-ma'ri-a and ²carried Is-ra-el away into As-syr'i-a, ³and placed them in Ha'lah and in Ha'bor by the river of Go'zan, and in the cities of the Medes.

Revised Version.

6 In the ninth year of Ho-sh'e-a, the king of As-syr'i-a took Sa-ma'ri-a, and carried Is-ra-el away unto As'syr'i-a, and placed them in Ha'lah, and in Ha'bor, on the river of Go'zan, and in

¹Chap. 18. 10; Hos. 12. 16; Gen. 22. 1.—²Lev. 26. 32; Deut. 28. 35, 64; 29. 27, 28.—³2Chron. 3. 24.

I. DISOBEDIENCE. Verses 6-12.

6. This verse tells of the end of the kingdom of Israel, after it had lasted two hundred and forty-five years, from the death of Solomon and the schism of Jeroboam, till the taking of Samaria by Shalmaneser, in the ninth year of Hoshea.—*Clarke*. If Shalmaneser continued to direct in person the siege of Samaria three years, we cannot be surprised that the patience of the

Authorized Version.

7 For so it was, that the children of Is'ra-el had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them out of the land of E'gypt, from under the hand of Pha'ra-oh king of E'gypt, and had feared other gods.

8 And ' walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Is'ra-el, and of the kings of Is'ra-el, which they had made.

Revised Version.

7 the cities of the Medes. And it was so, because the children of the Is'ra-el had sinned against the LORD their God, which brought them up out of the land of E'gypt from under the hand of Pha'ra-oh king of E'gypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the nations, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Is'ra-el, and of the kings of Is'ra el, which they ' made.

⁴ Lev. 18. 3; Deut. 18. 9; chap. 16. 3.

⁴ Or, practiced.

Ninevites was exhausted, and that in the third year they accepted the rule of the usurper who boldly proclaimed himself king. In the East it is always dangerous for the reigning prince to be long away from his metropolis. In the king's absence every thing languishes: the course of justice is suspended; public works are stopped; workmen are discharged; wages fall; and the people, anxious for better times, are ready to welcome any pretender who will come forward and declare the throne vacant, and claim to be its proper occupant.—*Rawlinson*. It seems to have been a favorite policy of Sargon's to colonize newly conquered districts by placing in them people from a distance, and forming a mixed population which would not be so likely to plan revolt or treason.—*Terry*. See introductory paragraphs on PERSONS and PLACES.

Upon him who will not be humbled by small evils God sends great and heavy ones. 1 Pet. 5. 6. All afflictions, rightly understood, are "angels to beckon" us to God. The universal practice of virtue would do away with the most of human suffering.

7. The children of Israel had sinned.—Here is the theocratic view of Israel's downfall. So momentous a catastrophe was the fall of the kingdom of Israel that the historian pauses in the midst of his narrative to dwell at length upon its moral aspects.—*Terry*. Which had (R. V. omits had) brought them up—This omission makes the clause refer, as it does in the Hebrew, exactly to the same time as "whom the Lord cast out" in the following verse.—*Lumby*. The deliverance from Egypt was really the selection of Israel to be God's peculiar and covenant people. Exod. 19. 4-6. It was not only the beginning, but also the symbol, of all divine grace toward Israel, the pledge of its divine guidance. It therefore stands at the head of the covenant or organic law (Exod. 20. 2; Deut. 5. 6), and it is always cited as the chief and fundamental act of the divine favor. Lev. 11. 45; Josh. 24. 17; 1 Kings 8. 51; Psa. 81. 10; Jer. 2. 6, etc. Therefore this author also makes that the stand-point for his review and criticism of the history.—*Lange*.

There is no apology for the sins of the children of the righteous. One cannot expect a Zulu or a Tartar, who has never heard of Christ, to live like St. John, and (though Christendom hardly yet recognizes it) one need as little expect Christians to develop in Baxter Street or the slums near the Thames. But the boys and girls in your class have many of them had Christian homes, perhaps all of them have been all their lives within the influences of the Gospel. Impress on their minds the great wickedness of souls so privileged turning from grace.

8. Verses 8-15 contain merely a development of what is said in verse 7, inasmuch as they go on to specify how, and by what means, the children of Israel "sinned," namely, partly by apostatizing from Jehovah and falling into idolatry (Exod. 20. 2, 3), and partly by making for themselves molten calf-images to represent Jehovah. Exod. 20. 4. It is shown in the verses from 18 to 23 that these transgressions brought down judgments upon them, and what was the character of these judgments.—*Lange*. And walked in the statutes of the heathen—The Book of Judges is full of instances of the way in which the people again and again fell away to the practices of the Canaanites. Comp. Judg. 2. 11-13.—*Lumby*. Of the kings of Israel, which they had made—That is, in addition to walking in the statutes of the heathen they also observed statutes of their kings, that is, religious ordinances which their kings had made. The allusion is to the calf-worship established at Beth-el and at Dan, and the worship of Baal which Ahab and Jezebel introduced.—*Terry*.

Authorized Version.

9 And the children of Is'ra-el did secretly ⁶those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, ⁷from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

Revised Version.

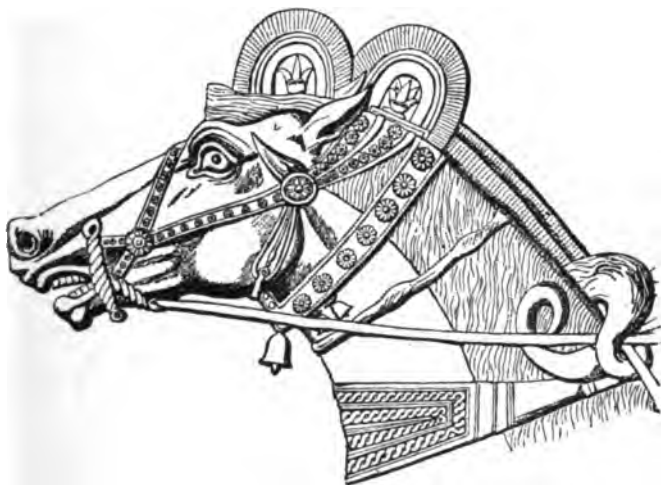
9 And the children of Is'ra-el did secretly things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen

⁶ Ezek. 8, 12.—⁷ Chap. 18, 8.

Men sometimes grow ungrateful for great blessings. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

False religious creeds lead to vice. It is useless to depend on sincerity for salvation. If a man does not believe there is a God, he cannot serve him. If he does not believe that God is love, he cannot serve him in the spirit of the Gospel. Every variation in his conception of sacred truth will vary his practice. What a man believes is of vital importance to his soul's good.

9. Israel did secretly those things that were not right—The general idea is, that they distorted his worship, and sacrilegiously changed his ordinances.—*Terry*. Literally, *They covered Jehovah, their God, over with words which were not right*. That is, they sought to conceal the true nature of Jehovah by arbitrary perversions of his word. By worshiping God in way-



HEAD OF AN ASSYRIAN CHARIOT HORSE.

of their own invention they concealed his true spiritual nature, and made Jehovah like the idols.—*Keil*. From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city—From the lonely buildings erected as a protection for the flocks (2 Chron. 26, 10) to the largest and most strongly fortified cities.—*Lange*. This may have been a proverbial expression. It is found again 18. 8.—*Lumby*.

External rites of worship will not save. They were not wanting in the land of Israel. In all the cities, on all the mountains and hills, under all the green trees, there were places for prayer, altars, and images, but nevertheless God was not truly known (Acts 17. 22, 23) and no worship of the true God in spirit and in truth existed. Their heart was darkened in spite of all their worship, (Rom. 1. 21, 23) because they did not revere the word of God, and placed their light under a bushel. So it was at the time when Luther appeared, and so it is yet wherever the Gospel is not set upon a candlestick that it may give light to the whole house. What is the use of crucifixes if the crucified One dwell not in the heart, and if the flesh with its lusts be not crucified?—*Lange*.

Secret sin is the parent of open transgression. Every outrageous crime grew from its seed as really as every oak from its acorn. In the hearts of our scholars there are suggestions of evil which may be uprooted like weeds, or fostered and trained like petted plants. Covert transgression always precedes open sin. And we can never escape the results of wrong-doing, however carefully hidden. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
10 And ⁹ they set them up ¹⁰ images ¹¹ and groves ¹² in every high hill, and under every green tree:	10 to the fenced city. And they set them up ¹¹ pillars and Ash'er-im upon every high hill, and under every green tree: and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as <i>did</i> the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:
11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as <i>did</i> the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:	11 tree: and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as <i>did</i> the nations whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to
12 For they served idols, ¹³ whereof the LORD had said unto them, ¹⁴ "Ye shall not do this thing.	12 provoke the LORD to anger: and they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. Yet the LORD testified unto Is'ra-el, and unto Ju'dah, by the hand of every prophet, and of every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments, and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.
13 Yet the LORD testified against Is'ra-el, and against Ju'dah, ¹⁴ by all the prophets, and ¹⁵ by all ¹⁶ the seers, saying, ¹⁷ Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments, and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.	13 thing. Yet the LORD testified unto Is'ra-el, and unto Ju'dah, by the hand of every prophet, and of every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by the hand

⁹ 1 Kings 14. 23; Isa. 57. 5.—¹⁰ Statues.—¹¹ Exod. 24. 12; Deut. 16. 21; Mic. 5. 14.—¹² Deut. 12. 2; chap. 16. 4.—¹³ Exod. 20. 2; Lev. 26. 1; Deut. 5. 7.—¹⁴ Deut. 4. 19.—¹⁵ By the hand of all.—¹⁶ 1 Sam. 9. 9.—¹⁷ Jer. 16. 11; 25. 5; 28. 15.

¹⁸ Or, obelisks.

10-12. Images.—The Hebrew word is first used of the stone (Gen. 28. 18) which Jacob set up for a pillar at Beth-el, and it seems likely, as it is used here and elsewhere in the accounts of Baal-worship, that these objects of worship were not figures, but of the nature of obelisks. They were probably for the most part of stone, though those mentioned as brought out of the house of Baal (2 Kings 10. 26) and burned must have been of wood. Perhaps those under cover were made of wood, and overlaid with precious metals (comp. Hos. 2. 8), while those out-of-doors were of stone.—*Cambridge Bible.* **Groves.**—The word is the proper name of a heathen goddess *Asherah*. Comp. Judg. 3. 7 and 1 Kings 18. 19. It is another form for Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians. *Asherah* was their female, as *Baal* was their male, divinity. In the plural, as here, and often elsewhere, it seems to be used in the more general sense of idols, or images of false gods, and may well be rendered simply *idols*; that is, the image-pillars of *Asherah*. This god was worshipped with similar licentious rites to those of Baal; referred to as *wicked things*.—*Terry.* **Ye shall not.**—The prohibition is given in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20. 4) and repeated in many parts of the law. Comp. Deut. 4. 16; 5. 8; 27. 15.

Sin's course is ever from bad to worse. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

God cannot tolerate idolatry. And idolatry does not consist only in casting a brazen image and putting it on a pedestal. In consists in consecrating our heart's best affections to any object not divine; and in the sight of the pure God there is not much moral difference between the old heathen swinging his censor in front of a golden calf and the modern youth who idolizes any of the attractions of life.

II. WARNING. Verses 13-17.

13. Yet the Lord testified against Israel.—What rendered their conduct the more inexcusable was that the Lord had preserved among them a succession of prophets, who testified against their conduct, and preached repentance to them and the readiness of God to forgive, provided they would return unto him, and give up their idolatries.—*Clarke.* God's witness by his prophets was at first a witness of warning and exhortation, and his anger was long restrained, and not at first grievously kindled against them.—*Cambridge Bible.* **Turn ye from your evil ways.**—For the language compare Jer. 7. 3; 18. 11; 25. 5; 26. 13; 35. 15. But the same message was in substance preached by every one of the prophets from Samuel to Malachi.

God has always sought his lost sheep. Pathetic is the picture of this long line of prophets and seers reiterating, "Turn from your evil ways," in the ears of heedless generations. God's under-shepherds are as faithful now as then; if you and I are lost it will not be because of the unfaithfulness of pastors and teachers.

Authorized Version.

14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but ¹⁴hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, and ¹⁵his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed ¹⁶vanity, and ¹⁷became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should ¹⁸not do like them.

16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and ¹⁹made them molten images, even two calves, ²⁰and made a grove, and worshiped all the host of heaven, ²¹and served Ba'al.

Revised Version.

14 of my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their neck, like to the neck of their fathers, who believed not in the LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified unto them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the nations that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them. And they forsook all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made an Asherah, and worshiped all the host of

¹⁴ Deut. 31. 27. Prov. 29. 1.—¹⁵ Deut. 29. 25.—¹⁶ Deut. 32. 21; 1 Kings 16. 13; 1 Cor. 8. 4.—¹⁷ Ps. 115. 8; Rom. 1. 21.—¹⁸ Deut. 17. 20, 21.—¹⁹ Exod. 32. 8; 1 Kings 12. 26.—²⁰ 1 Kings 14. 15; 15. 12; 16. 23.—²¹ 1 Kings 16. 31; 18. 16, 22, 19. 16, 16; 22. 52; chap. 11. 16.

Use is the true test of worth. The Hindu nabob who has a bolted chamber filled up to the ceiling with gold and precious stones is not so rich as the civilized merchant who has a small fraction of the same wealth invested in the activities of business life. And Israel was not spiritually enriched because it had more seers and prophets than other nations; its true wealth would have been in heeding their advice.

14. Hardened their necks—R. V., neck. The original has the singular, the people being regarded as one body. Israel throughout the Scripture is constantly reproached as a "stiff-necked people." Comp. Exod. 32. 9; 33. 3; Deut. 10. 16; Acts 7. 51, and parallel passages.—*Cambridge Bible*.

15. Followed vanity, and became vain—Comp. Jer. 2. 5; Rom. 1. 21. The idol is from the theocratic stand-point a *nothing*, a *breath* (comp. 1 Cor. 8. 4), and therefore devotion to idols can lead only to emptiness, vanity—utter spiritual worthlessness.—*Terry*.

Rebellious fathers are apt to have rebellious children.

It is not strange, looking from the human stand-point, that the Israelites of Hosea's date were so bad. Their wickedness was bred in the bone. But this rule has many blessed exceptions. God is continually glorifying himself and blessing mankind by raising from degraded environment choice apostles of truth.



A SATRAP WORSHIPPING THE SUN.

16. And they left (R. V., forsook) all the commandments—The Revised Version adopts the most usual rendering of the verb, which is stronger in such a combination than "left." It is noteworthy that the sin of the calves is connected with the casting away of all the divine law. As soon as any other object is set up instead of God all that he values has perished from man's worship. Gal. 5. 24; Rom. 6. 16.—*Lumby*. Worshiped all the host of heaven—The Assyrian astral worship was probably introduced into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the times of Pekah and Ahaz, and chapters 21, 3 and 23. 5, 11 show that it was common in Judah in the times of Manasseh and Ammon. But long anterior to this it may have been introduced in connection with the Baal and Ashtoreth worship of Phenicia, for Ashtoreth was not

209

Authorized Version.

17 And ²²they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, and used ²³divination and enchantments, and sold ²⁴themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Is'ra-el, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left ²⁵but the tribe of Ju'dah only.

Revised Version.

17 heaven, and served Ba'al. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Is'ra-el, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Ju'dah only.

²² Lev. 18. 21; 20. 9; chap. 18. 2; 2 Chron. 28. 3; Ps. 106. 37, 39; Isa. 57. 5; Jer. 7. 31; 29. 25; Ezek. 16. 20; 22. 27. ²³ Deut. 18. 10; Isa. 2. 6.—²⁴ 1 Kings 21. 20; Isa. 50. 1.—²⁵ 1 Kings 11. 15, 22.

without a sidereal character.—*Terry*. On the temptation to this worship of heavenly bodies, and its prohibition, compare Deut. 4. 19; 17. 3. See also what is said of Hezekiah's and Josiah's reformations. That God's people did fall into this sin we know from Jer. 8. 2; 19. 18; Zeph. 1. 5.—*Wilkinson*.

17. Caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire—That the children offered in such sacrifices were actually burned is seen from 2 Kings 17. 31; Ezek. 16. 21; and many other passages. But from the words of Ezekiel it may perhaps be inferred that the victims were first slain and then burned. "Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured . . . thou hast slain my children and delivered them up in causing them to pass through the fire unto them."—*Lumby*. Used divination and enchantments—No record of this appears in the previous history of the Ten Tribes, but abundant evidence in the allusions of contemporary prophets. So Isa. 2. 6; 8. 19; 19. 8; 47. 13; Hos. 4. 12; Mic. 3. 7.—*Terry*. They "divined" by the use of lots and marked arrows. Comp. Ezek. 21. 21, 22. The word translated "enchantments" refers to omens derived from sights and sounds.

To those wedded to sin God's warnings are vain. Vers. 13-17. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

II. THE DOOM. Verse 18.

18. Therefore—In view of all the sins mentioned in verses 7-17. See note on verse 7.—*Terry*. Removed them out of his sight—That is, out of the Holy Land where Jehovah had his dwelling; out of the land of revelation.—*Bähr*. The language is accommodated to human ideas. God's eye was regarded as specially directed to the land of Canaan, where he had chosen to place his name. So to be taken away from that land is a removal from his special oversight.—*Lumby*. None left but the tribe of Judah only—Under this name all those of Benjamin and Levi, and the Israelites who abandoned their idolatries and joined with Judah, are comprised. It was the Ten Tribes that were carried away by the Assyrians.—*Clarke*.

We should see ourselves in this mirror, and not bring on and hasten the ruin of our fatherland by our sins; for what here befell the kingdom of Israel, or even more, may befall us. Rom. 11. 21.—*Wurt-Sumner*.

God cannot recognise impure service. (Ver. 18.) Some of the Israelites did not serve Baal or Ashtoreth, but were content to bow before the brazen calf at Beth-el. But one cannot bribe or deceive the Almighty; and purity of heart is a needed foundation for true worship.

Privileges abused are eventually withdrawn. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Men sometimes grow ungrateful for great blessings. Vers. 7, 8.—A poor negress, a slave in Mauritius, with great labor and long parsimony had saved enough to purchase her daughter from their common owner, and was content to remain in bondage herself for the pleasure of seeing her child free. The affectionate mother soon after happened into a room where the daughter was sitting, and seated herself beside her. The inhuman daughter actually turned

around in a rage and exclaimed, "How dare you sit down in my presence? Do you not know that I am a free woman and you are a slave? Rise instantly and leave the room!"

Socrates, after a long career spent in denouncing the wrongs of his age and trying to improve its morals, was condemned to death and obliged to drink poison. Dante, when Italy was torn by political factions, labored for Italian unity with untiring zeal and was rewarded with exile. Columbus was sent home in irons from the country he had discovered. He died the poorest man in the kingdom he had spent his life-time to enrich. Bruno, for his advocacy of the Copernican system, was seized by the Inquisition and burned alive at Rome in 1660.—*Denton*.

We cannot escape the results of secret sin. Ver. 9.—When a wound in a soldier's foot refuses to heal, the surgeon examines it very minutely. Each bone is there and in its place. There is no apparent cause for the inflammation, and yet the wound refuses to heal. The surgeon probes until his lancet comes into contact with a hard foreign substance. "Here it is," says he; "a bullet is lodged here. This must come out or the wound will not close." So secret sin works toward death.—*Spurgeon*.

You have seen a ship out in the bay, swinging with the tide and seeming as if it would follow it; and yet it cannot, for down beneath the water it is anchored. So a soul may have its occasional movements toward heaven, but can make no progress while anchored to a secret sin.

A relief life-boat was built at New London thirteen years ago. While the workmen were busy over it one man lost his hammer, and it was nailed up in the bottom of the boat. The boat was put to service, and every time it rocked on the waves that hammer was tossed to and fro. It wore for itself a track until it had worn through planking and keel down to the very copper plating before it was found out.

Sin's course is ever from bad to worse. Vers. 9-12.—The Earl of Rochester stepped so slightly aside from the path of virtue and religion that for a time he still passed for a pious man. He threw aside one restraint after another till he actually reveled in sin. He framed arguments for it. He enticed others to wickedness, and even wrote panegyrics upon it.

Carlyle quotes out of the Koran a story of the dwellers by the Dead Sea to whom Moses was sent. They saw no comeliness in Moses. They sniffed and sneered at him till he withdrew from them. But nature did not withdraw. When next we find these men, they, according to the Koran, are all changed into apes. By not using their souls they lost them. "And now," exclaims Carlyle, "their only employment is to sit there and look out into the smokiest, dreariest, most undecipherable sort of universe. Only once in seven days do they remember that they once had souls. Hast thou never, O traveler, fallen in with parties of this tribe?"

To those wedded to sin God's warnings are vain. Vers. 13-17. When the ice is marked DANGEROUS the warning should be sufficient; and when the notice is repeated at every corner, he who ventures on the rotten ice will be a suicide should he perish.

"Will it make a loud noise?" asked a mechanic when buying an alarm clock. The clock-maker let him hear it. It was loud, and the man bought it. The first morning the effect was all that he could wish. But by and by the effect grew less, till at last the sleeper slept on undisturbed, and had to learn that no warning will be effectual when the will is bent on heedlessness.

A traveler on the Scotch coast took the road by the sands, which was safe only at low tides. Pleased with the view of inrolling waves and precipitous rocks, he saw not his danger. A man presently descended the cliffs, and by a loud halloo warned him not to proceed. "*If you pass this spot you lose your last chance of escape.*" The tides have covered the road you have passed; they are near the foot of the cliffs before you, and by this ascent alone you can escape." He disregarded the warning. His onward journey was arrested by the sea. The rising waters had cut off his retreat. He despaired of scaling the inaccessible cliffs. He was swept away by the billows from a projecting rock on which he took refuge, and fell a victim to obstinacy and disobedience.—*Biblical Museum*.

Privileges abused are eventually withdrawn. Ver. 18. Let us remember that solemn strange temple which tells us that on the night before Jerusalem fell the guard of the temple heard a sad voice saying, "Let us depart," and were aware as of the sound of many wings passing from out the Holy Place; and on the morrow the iron heels of the Roman legionaries trod the marble pavement of the innermost shrine, and the heathen eyes gazed upon the empty place where the glory of God should have dwelt, and a torch flung by an unknown hand burned with fire the holy and beautiful house where he had promised to put his name forever.—*MacLaren*.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **The fall of Samaria.** The capital of the Ten Tribes was besieged three years by the Assyrians; Hoshea was taken before the city fell; and the final capture was not by Shalman or Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, but, by his successor, the great Sargon, as is stated upon one of the monuments. Thus ended the kingdom established by Jeroboam in 975 B. C.

2. **The captivity of Israel.** Describe the wholesale deportation of the Israelites. Such of them as were not slain were taken a thousand miles to the region around the Caspian Sea, where they were settled. From this captivity Israel, unlike Judah afterward, never returned. As a people they were mingled among the heathen races, and lost their separate nationality.

3. **The cause of the captivity.** The historian may find the causes of the rise and fall of nations in political movements, for example, the fall of Israel from the rise of Assyria. But the prophet strikes deeper, and finds it one word—*sin*. Notice the growth in sin which the lesson describes:

1.) *Ingratitude*; forgetting the Lord God who had made them a nation. Ver. 7. How many receive God's mercies and forget him who gave them.

2.) *Evil companionship*; walking in the way of the heathen. Ver. 8. They took the wicked for their associates, fell into their customs, and adopted their laws. Whenever the Church and the world walk together it is the world that leads, and not the Church, as is manifest in fashionable society and its patronage of the Church at the present time.

3.) *Secret sin*; at first doing secretly the things forbidden by God's law (ver. 9); hiding their idolatry as something to be ashamed of.

4.) *Open sin*; practicing their abominations publicly, after a little; setting up images, building altars, burning incense. Vers. 10-12.

5. *Rejecting God's messengers*; refusing to listen to the prophets, who were sent to them, as Christ's preachers are sent now to men. Vers. 13, 14.

6.) *Open apostasy*. They renounced the service of God, and deliberately adopted the worship of idols. Observe that more than half of the world are still idol-worshippers; and that even in countries called Christian there is a constant tendency to lapse into idolatrous forms, the adoration of images, etc.

7.) *Moral debasement*, which is the result of idolatry; offering their children in sacrifice; sinking into the lowest and vilest forms of vice. Such crime is still practiced in every heathen land.

The teacher can find illustrations at every step of this downward scale in Israel's sin, and can make abundant application to our own times.

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LESSON IX.—May 31.

THE TEMPLE REPAIRED.—2 CHRON. 24. 4-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—God loveth a cheerful giver.—2 Cor. 9. 7.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Year unknown; early in the reign of King Joash.**PLACE.**—Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah.

PERSONS.—1. Joash or Jehoash, the eighth king of Judah; son of King Ahaziah and Zibiah. He was born about 884 B. C. Ahaziah reigned only one year, and at his death Athaliah his mother [and Joash's grandmother] resolved to seat herself upon David's throne. She was the daughter of Ahab, and the widow of Jehoram, one of Judah's most wicked kings. She ordered all the male members of the royal family to be put to death, and actually reigned in Jerusalem for six years. But the infant Joash had been concealed in the temple by his aunt Jehosheba, the wife of the priest Jehoiada. When Joash had reached the age of seven, Jehoiada suddenly declared him king. Athaliah, who was probably worshiping Baal at the time, was aroused by the shouts of the people and went to the temple, where her cry of "treason" only secured her own arrest. She was taken beyond the sacred precincts, and, with Mattan, the priest of Baal, was put to death. When Joash thus ascended the throne [877 B. C.] he was probably the only living descendant of Solomon. He behaved well as long as his uncle Jehoiada lived, but in the later years of his reign became rebellious toward God and ungrateful to his truest earthly friends. 2. Jehoiada, the high-priest. He was brother-in-law to King Ahaziah, and therefore uncle of Joash. In the revolution which enthroned his nephew he showed great tact and ability. He was always loyal to Jehovah, and seems to have been a safe and wise counselor. He lived to the extraordinary age of one hundred and thirty, and was buried with great honor "among the kings."

PARALLEL PASSAGE.—2 Kings 12. 5-17.**Authorized Version.**

4 And it came to pass after this, *that* Jo'ash was minded ^ato repair the house of the LORD.

Revised Version.

4 And it came to pass after this, *that* Jo'ash was minded to restore the

a To renew.

I. PURPOSE. Verses 4-7.

We now pass in our lessons from the northern kingdom of Israel to that of Judah.

4. **After this**—Probably after his marriage, mentioned in verse 3; in his young manhood; he had ascended the throne at seven years of age. **Was minded**—He was not compelled to wait for the slow processes of a Parliament. His will was law. **To repair the house of the Lord**—During the reigns of Joram and Athaliah the temple of God had been pillaged to enrich that of Baal, and the whole structure permitted to fall into decay. See ver. 7.—*Clarke*.

All true reforms begin at the house of the Lord. What Joash really sought was a great reform of manners and laws—the abolition of idolatry, which in its moral effects was even worse than the utmost drunkenness and licentiousness of modern nations. It was sapping the life of the kingdom. The young king knew that he must get rid of it if his monarchy was to continue. He knew also that the only true way to abolish it was to have in its place, vigorously conducted, the service of Jehovah; and he wisely began by repairing the house of the Lord. Modern statesmen and patriotic citizens who mourn over vices that imperil our noblest institutions, the rapid increase of the percentage of illiterate people, the increasing power of the liquor traffic, the amassing of wealth in the hands of the few, the encroachments of the Roman Catholic Church, and other public questions that are daily discussed, would do well to imitate Joash in their policy. The reform that does not begin at the house of Jehovah will not reach very far.

The Church is a main safeguard of the nation. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.

5 And he gathered together the priests and the Le'vites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Ju'dah, and ¹gather of all Is'ra-el money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Le'vites hastened it not.

6 And ²the king called for Je-hoi'a-da the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Le'vites to bring in out of Ju'dah and out of Je-ru'sa-lem the collection, *according to the commandment* of ³Mo'ses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Is'ra-el, for the 'tabernacle of witness?

Revised Version.

5 house of the LORD. And he gathered together the priests and the Le'vites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Ju'dah, and gather of all Is'ra-el money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit 6 the Le'vites hastened it not. And the king called for Je-hoi'a-da the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Le'vites to bring in out of Ju'dah and out of Je-ru'sa-lem the tax of Mo'ses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation ¹ of Is'ra-el, for the tent of the testi-

¹ 2 Kings 12. 4. — ² 2 Kings 12. 7. — ³ Exod. 30. 12, 13, 14, 16.
— ⁴ Num. 1. 50; Acts 7. 44.

¹ Or, for Israel.

5. The priests and the Levites—The secular interests of these men helped to keep them loyal. Whenever the worship of Baal predominated their "occupation was gone." Go out—We can hardly overestimate the political importance of such a powerful hereditary class, already so thoroughly organized that they could be readily turned from their prescribed temple duties to the gathering of a public fund. All Israel—Or, better, *all Israelites*. From year to year—It was evidently in a state of great dilapidation. The Levites hastened it not—We need not search far for the cause of their tardiness. The three sources of income on which the young king depended for the repair of the temple had always been measurably open, but had probably been turned by the priests and Levites to their own private use. These sources Dr. Jamieson explains as follows: (1.) "The money of every one that passeth the account," namely, half a shekel, as an offering to the Lord. Exod. 30. 13. (2.) "The money that every man is set at," that is, the redemption price of every one who had devoted himself or any thing belonging to him to the Lord, and the amount of which was estimated according to certain rules. Lev. 27. 1-8. (3.) Free-will or voluntary offerings made to the sanctuary. The first two should have been paid annually. See 2 Kings 12, 4.

If you want a thing done quickly and well, do it yourself or personally supervise it. A long time had passed since Joash was first "minded to repair the house of the Lord." Hundreds of men had told thousands of fellow laborers and servants to do a duty, and "see that ye hasten;" "howbeit" they "hastened it not." Emphasize the importance of punctuality, promptitude, diligence, and the other homely virtues.

Every one should contribute to God's worship, not only because every dollar is needed, but because every person needs to give his dollar. Joash could perhaps have levied a tax on the Jerusalem nabobs that would have paid at once for the repair of the temple, but that would have done more harm than good. People who do not pay for privileges do not value them highly. God specially blesses the person who gladly gives of his goods to the cause of the Lord. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

6. The king called for Jehoiada the chief—That is, chief of the priesthood, by which, however, is not necessarily meant the high-priest.—Schmoller. Why hast thou not required—Literally, *asked*. To bring in . . . the collection—The "tax" or assessment of Moses, willingly paid by the community, of half a shekel a head.—Lange. It was a poll-tax levied on every man from twenty years old and upward, and was considered as a ransom for their souls that there might be no plague among them—a sort of covenant with God.

Let us have zeal for God. The people had brought money in abundance, and the pious Jehoiada was over the priests, and yet nothing was done! Jehoiada was a good man, but not apparently zealous and active; and piety without zeal is of little use when a reformation in religion is needed. Philip Melancthon was orthodox, pious, and learned, but he was a man of comparative inactivity. In many respects Martin Luther was by far his inferior, but in zeal and activity he was a flaming and consuming fire, and by him, under God, was the mighty Reformation from the corruptions of popery effected. Ten thousand Jehiadas and Melancthons might have wished it in vain: Luther worked, and God worked by him, in him, and for him.—Clarke.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
7 For 'the sons of Ath'a-li'ah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated 'things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Ba'al-im.	7 many? For the sons of Ath'a-li'ah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon the Ba'al-im.
8 And at the king's commandment 'they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD.	8 So the king commanded, and they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD.
9 And they made 'a proclamation through Ju'dah and Je-ru'sa-lem, to bring in to the LORD the collection that Mo'ses the servant of God laid upon Is'ra-el in the wilderness.	9 And they made a proclamation through Ju'dah and Je-ru'sa-lem, to bring in for the LORD the tax that Mo'ses the servant of God laid upon
<small>8 Chap. 21, 17; 22, 3, 4; Psa. 12, 8.—8 Kings 12, 4.— 9 Kings 12, 9.—8 A voice; Exod. 35, 6.</small>	

Unfaithfulness in any duty to man is unfaithfulness to God. It is the glory of the Christian religion that this thought has been brought out more plainly by gospel writers than by any teacher before the gospel time. The apostle Paul especially commands us not to be men-pleasers, but to do all things as in the sight of God.

Overseers are responsible for the deeds of their subordinates. Jehoiada the chief was responsible for the failure of the most insignificant Levite at the farthest extremity of the kingdom. If men properly felt the responsibilities of office in Church and state they would not so eagerly seek it. The higher our position the greater our responsibility.

7. For the sons of Athaliah—*Jerome* supposed that these "sons" were the priests of Baal, but probably the phrase refers to Ahaziah with his brothers and brothers' sons (comp. 21. 17; 22. 8), who may have shown their zeal for idolatry at a very early age.—*Zöckler*. Broken up the house of God—Rifted it of its consecrated treasures and interrupted its services. All the dedicated things—Golden and silver vessels, etc., presented at different times by grateful worshippers.

One sinner destroyeth much good. "That wicked woman Athaliah"—how far her vicious influence extended! Her example degraded the entire nation. Her sons broke up the house of God. The virus of her life worked on until years afterward, when the last king of Judah saw his sons killed before his eyes, which were then put out. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

II ENDEAVOR. Verses 8-12.

8. At the king's commandment they made a chest—The first methods of collection not proving so productive as was expected, because of the dilatoriness of the priests, a new arrangement was proposed. A chest was placed at the entrance to the temple, into which the money given by the people for the repairs was to be put by the Levite door-keepers. The object of this chest was to emphasize the separation between the money raised for building purposes and the money destined for the use of the priests, in the hope that the people would be more liberal when they understood that their offerings would be devoted directly to the repairs, and that this work was no longer to devolve on the priests, but to be undertaken by the king.—*Fausset*. From 2 Chron. 24. 8 we learn that this chest was at first set beside the altar; but afterward, for the convenience of the people, was placed outside the gate.—*Clarke*.

9. Made a proclamation—This royal edict, ordering the immediate collection of the assessment ordained by Moses, would make a deep stir. It would be evident to all Baal's worshippers that King Joash was in earnest. It is likely that the moral corruption of the capital city was much greater than that of the country; and now that the court was setting godly fashions, one half of the battle was fought.

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. When you quote this text to your class, emphasize the adjective, not the noun. It is not merely the giving that God desires, but the cheerfulness. It is the hearty rendering of what service we can for others. It is not the gold or the bill that indicates love, but the love that is indicated by the bills, that God wants. Whether you are able to give little or much, give cheerfully.

Authorized Version.

10 And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.

11 Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Le'vites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

12 And the king and Je-hoi'a-da gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD.

13 So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it.

Revised Version.

10 Is'ra-el in the wilderness. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an

11 end. And it was so, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's 'office' by the hand of the Le'vites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's 'scribe' and the chief priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to its place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

12 And the king and Je-hoi'a-da gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD; and they hired masons and carpenters to restore the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to

13 repair the house of the LORD. So the workmen wrought, and 'the work was perfected by them, and they set up the house of God 'in its state,

⁹ Kings 12, 10. — The healing went up upon the work, or, by their hand; Neh. 4, 7.

—⁹ Or, officers. —¹⁰ Or, which was under the hand. —¹¹ Or, secretary. —¹² Heb, healing went up upon the work. —¹³ Or, according to the proportion thereof.

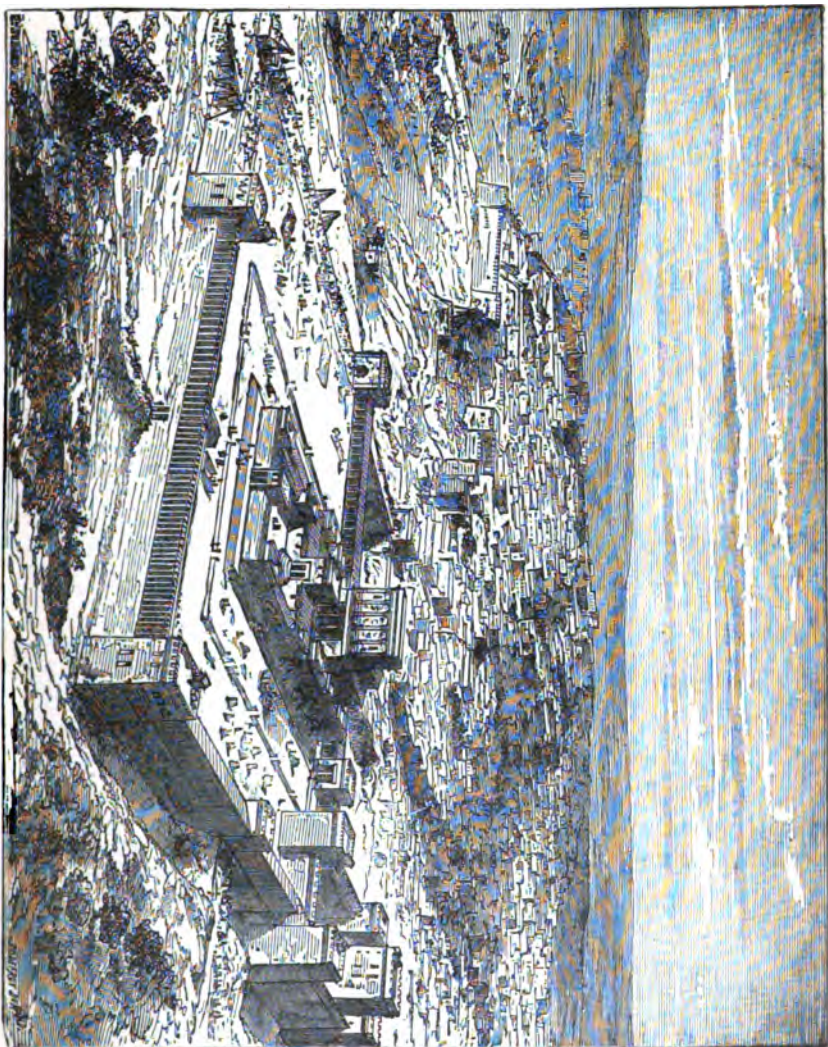
10. All the princes and all the people rejoiced—Even idolatrous princes would find it to their interest to follow the example of their king and worship Jehovah, and the "people" would imitate the princes. When the fashion was once set it became a cause for rejoicing. The devout would all the more cheerfully pay their taxes and make their voluntary contributions, now that they had good reason to expect the speedy restoration of the temple.

11. At what time—The first clause of this verse should read, "And it came to pass at the time when one brought the chest to the survey of the king," that is, for the royal surveillance or keeping.—*Zöckler*. When they saw—Better, *on their seeing*. Whenever the Levitical caretakers saw that the box was full it became their duty to pass it over to the king. The king's scribe—Joash sent his secretary along with an agent of the high priest to count the money in the chest from time to time, and deliver the amount to the overseer of the building, who paid the workmen and purchased all necessary materials. The custom of putting sums of certain amounts in bags, which are labeled and sealed by a proper officer, is a common way of using the currency in Turkey and other Eastern countries.—*Jamieson*. The high-priest's officer—It was necessary to associate with the high-priest some civil authority, to get the neglected work performed, but the priesthood must not be ignored.—*Clarke*. Thus they did day by day—Literally, "to day by day," that is, every day when it was necessary, every time that the chest was full.—*Zöckler*.

12. The king and Jehoiada—The civil and ecclesiastical heads of the nation. Such as did the work—Literally, *to the work-master*; as we would say, "to the contractor." The service of the house—That is, the labor needed for the repair of the house; not at all ritualistic or devotional service. And hired—"And they were hiring." They were compelled to hire new men daily, for the work was pushed with increasing energy as the liberality of the people increased. Masons and carpenters—From this we see how great the decay must have been.

III. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT. Verses 13, 14.

13. The work was perfected by them—Furtherance was given to the work by their hand.—*Murphy*. In his state—Literally, "in its form," or, "on its measure;" that is, in the original proportions. They restored, as far as possible, the plans of Solomon's architect.



"THEY SET THE HOUSE OF GOD IN HIS STATE, AND STRENGTHENED IT."

Authorized Version.

14 And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Je-hoi'a-da, 'whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, *even* vessels to minister, and ⁴to offer *withal*, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they ¹⁰offered burnt-offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Je-hoi'a-da.

Revised Version.

14 and strengthened it. And when they had made an end, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Je-hoi'a-da, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, even vessels to minister, and ¹⁰to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt-offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Je-hoi'a-da.

¹ 1 Kings 7. 46; 2 Kings 19. 12.—^d Or, pestilence.—¹⁰ Exod. 25. 28.

¹⁰ Or, pestilence.

Strength and beauty in God's sanctuary. See Psa. 96. 6. Solomon erected a beautiful parable in stone and brass when he raised the two pillars Jachin and Boaz. One was typical of strength and the other represented beauty, and Talmudic writers tell us that the pillar typical of beauty was so massive in its proportions that visitors supposed it was Strength; while that called Strength was so graceful it was often mistaken for Beauty. This is God's ideal for us all. Our graciousness and sweetness of temper, our patience and ready forgiveness, should be as prominent as our strength of will in resisting wrong, and our firmness, where firmness is necessary to be shown.

We should persevere until we succeed. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

14. When they had finished.—When the restoration of the masonry and woodwork was considered complete. **The rest of the money.**—The completion of the repairs had not exhausted the liberality of the people. **Vessels to minister.**—Altar vessels (comp. Num. 4. 12), from which cups (Exod. 25. 29) and other gold and silver vessels are there distinguished.—*Zöckler*. **And they offered burnt-offerings . . . all the days of Jehoiada.**—As long as he had the direction of the temple-worship it was conducted in a regular and legal way. That it quite ceased after Jehoiada's death neither the present phrase nor the subsequent narrative affirms.—*Lange*.

The influence of a lofty character. Jehoiada was a little lax in the first verses of this lesson, but the strength of his character is notably shown throughout the history of King Joash. As long as he lived Joash was the champion of Jehovah's worship. A beautiful lesson could be drawn by contrasting "that wicked woman Athaliah" with the strong and pious priest, whose sheer moral force seems to have kept the kingdom for years faithful to God.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

The Church is a main safeguard of the nation. Ver. 4.—The sand-reed, which grows along the sandy shores of Europe, represents the influence of religion upon society. Its roots penetrate to a considerable depth and spread in all directions, forming a net-work which binds together the loosest sands; while its strong, tall leaves protect the surface from drought, and afford shelter to small plants which soon form a new green surface on the bed of sand. But for the sand-reed the sea-wind would long since have drifted the sand far into the interior, converting many a fruitful acre into a waste. The grass causes the sand to successfully resist the most furious gale.—*Hartwig*. A figure of the Christian Church.

Every one should contribute to God's worship. Ver. 5.—"None shall come before me empty." The poor man was not deprived of worship. He could bring his turtle doves, or, if nothing else, his little portion of flour, wine, new corn, or sprinkling of salt. "The poorest must not come empty."—*Todd*.

A poor widow contributed to the Dorpatian Branch of the Russian Bible Society a ruble, and to the question whether that sum was not too much for one in her circumstances, she answered: "*Love is not afraid of giving too much.*"

On a certain occasion, after a sermon in Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, a man put a crown piece (a dollar and a quarter) on the plate instead of a penny. When he noticed his mistake he requested to have it back. The door-keeper said: "In once in forever." "Aweel, aweel,"

grunted the unwilling giver, "I'll get credit for it in heaven." "Na, na," said Jeems, "Ye'll get credit only for the penny."—*Dr. Brun.*

The higher our position the greater our responsibility. Ver. 6. John Brown, of Haddington, said to a young minister who complained of the smallness of his congregation: "It is as large a one as you will want to give account for in the day of judgment." The admonition is appropriate to more than ministers.

Our sinners destroyeth much good. Ver. 7. A child playing with matches caused the destruction of two hundred and thirty-two houses in the Hungarian village of Nemedi. The entire population was thereby rendered bankrupt.

In some railway carriages they put grease in a box over the wheel. The friction causes the grease to melt, and enables the wheel to go round smoothly. If the supply fails the wheel will get hot and set the carriage on fire. One day the engineer noticed one wheel *was* hot. In examining it he found a number of flies had got into the grease box and prevented the flow. So the little flies stopped the huge train.—*Laughan.*

We should persevere in good work till we succeed. Vers. 13, 14. An old man whom Mr. Thornton had in vain urged to come to church was taken ill. Mr. Thornton went to see him, but the patient firmly said: "I don't want you here; you may go away." The following day he called again, and received a similar reply. For twenty-one days successively he paid his visit, and on the twenty-second succeeded. The old man recovered, and became one of the most regular attendants in the house of God.

Cyrus Field, Palissy, Goodyear, Stevenson, Edison, and other inventors furnish fine illustrations of perseverance against great difficulties.

When the wall of old St. Paul's, London, was pulled down, Sir Christopher Wren came to a piece of formidable old wall. A battering-ram was made and plied against it for five days without apparent effect. Then at a given blow it was crashed to pieces. The people said: "What a blow that was, to be sure!" Yet not that *particular* blow, but the *succession* of efforts, brought it down.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. Call attention to the **two kingdoms**, Israel and Judah. Draw a map showing the boundaries of each. Note that, having completed the story of Israel, we now turn to that of Judah.

2. It would be well to name the **kings of Judah**, down to Joash, and with the more important to give an event or a trait; as, Rehoboam the first king, Abijah the short-reigning, Aza the reformer, Jehoshaphat the prosperous and pious, Jehoram the unworthy, Ahaziah the slain, Athaliah the usurper, Joash the youthful.

3. Tell the interesting story of **Joash, the boy-king**; his concealment in the temple, the revolution wrought by Jehoiada, the slaughter of Athaliah, the coronation of the child.

4. Describe the **temple**, its general plan—court, altar, holy place, holy of holies, and chambers for priests. Show its condition at this time, and how it came to be in such a condition. What was the difference between the ancient temple and a Christian church? Are there reasons why churches should be noble architectural structures?

5. Perhaps Joash was led by a **grateful memory** to repair the temple. What did he owe to that house? What do we owe to God's house and God's people? How may we show our gratitude?

6. Notice the **first attempt** at raising the money needed for the repairs of the temple. Who originated it? What was its success or failure? Whose was the fault? Is there any suggestion in this for our own church work?

7. Describe the **financial plan** for the repairs in the temple. 1.) Its royal origin. 2.) Its popularity. 3.) Its working. 4.) Its success. Notice that those who worship in God's house are apt to be liberal givers toward it. How much of the benevolence of our time is among the church-going people? Infidels are rarely supporters of charities.

8. Show **what was done** with the money raised. How honorable the work of those who were called to repair and decorate the house of the Lord! What similar work may we do for the Church? In what spirit should our church work be wrought?

9. Notice as **our example** in this work, that we find here: 1.) A voluntary offering. 2.) A rejoicing offering. 3.) A liberal offering. 4.) An offering to God's cause.

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LESSON X.—June 7.

HEZEKIAH THE GOOD KING.—2 CHRON. 29. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Them that honor me I will honor. 1 Sam. 2. 30.

TIME.—726 B. C. PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—1. **Hezekiah**, King of Judah, son of Ahaz and Abijah, born 751-750 B. C.; began to reign at the age of twenty-five, and occupied the throne twenty-nine years—726-697 B. C. He was a thorough reformer of religion; a brave defender of his nation; singularly wise in his management of finance; he improved the water supply of Jerusalem, and by his attention to the needs of his subjects, his literary skill, and his preservation of genealogical records he impressed his character deeply on his times. 2. **Abijah**. Of Hezekiah's mother nothing is known. She is called Abi, 2 Kings 18. 2. 3. **Zechariah**, the king's grandfather, is only mentioned in this connection.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Joash continued to serve the true God as long as the good priest Jehoiada lived, but afterward became an idolater. Zechariah, the prophet, son of Jehoiada, was stoned to death for reproving him. Joash after a reign of forty years was slain by his servants, and succeeded by his son Amaziah, a bad man. Amaziah was slain 810 B. C., and succeeded by his son Uzziah, who reigned fifty-two years, and was a wise, good, and successful king. Because of irreverence in old age he was smitten with leprosy. His son Jotham was appointed regent, and succeeded him on the throne. Jotham was followed by Ahaz, the most wicked of all the kings of Judah. Judah was invaded by Pekah, King of Israel, in alliance with Rezin, King of Damascus. The intended alliance of Ahaz with Assyria was denounced by the prophet Isaiah. In 726 Hezekiah succeeded Ahaz.—*Illust.*

Authorized Version.

1 Hez'e-ki'ah ¹began to reign *when*
he was five and twenty years old, and

¹2 Kings 18. 1.

Revised Version.

1 ¹ Hez'e-ki'ah began to reign *when* he
was five and twenty years old; and

¹See 2 Kings 18. 1-3.

I. HEZEKIAH'S REIGN. Verses 1, 2.

1, 2.—**Hezekiah began to reign**—Amid the most heathenish surroundings. His father was the worst man who ever sat on the throne of Judah, and the idolatrous religions which competed with the religion of Jehovah for the favor of the young prince were seductive and captivating in

219

Authorized Version.

he reigned nine and twenty years in Je-ru'sa-lem. And his mother's name was A-bi'jah, the daughter ² of Zech'a-ri'ah.

2 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Da'vid his father had done.

3 He, in the ¹ first year of his reign, in the first month, ⁴ opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.

4 And he brought in the priests and the Le'vites, and gathered them together into the east street,

5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Le'vites; ⁶ sanctify yourselves, and

Revised Version.

he reigned nine and twenty years in Je-ru'sa-lem: and his mother's name was A-bi'jah the daughter of Zech'a-ri'ah. And he did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Da'vid his father had done. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and Le'vites, and gathered them together into the broad place on the east, and said unto them, Hear me, ye Le'vites; now sanctify

² Chap. 24. 5.—³ Prov. 8. 17.—⁴ Chap. 23. 24.—⁵ 1 Chron. 15. 12; chap. 25. 4.

their magnificence and the picturesque license of their ceremonies. He reigned nine and twenty years—Long before he was born the Judean power had begun to wane. God's providence is evidently interwoven through the history of those years. Did that which was right—Made a full and irrevocable choice of the Jehovah religion.

Moral choice made early in life. Hezekiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord when he ascended the throne, but doubtless years before his coronation he had studied the law of the Lord, and turned his back upon idolatrous rites. Other lessons this year have brought to view the fact that the great majority of conversions occur in early life. The hope of establishing Christian character in any of the boys and girls you love diminishes wonderfully with each passing week.

Be prompt. In the first month the doors of the temple of the house of the Lord were thrown open. The difficulties were great. The court may have been still in mourning because of the death of Ahas. But Hezekiah did not wait to get ready. Nothing could have been prompter than his decision, and his action followed it closely.

Good men often owe much to godly parentage. It has been supposed that Hezekiah's mother's influence counteracted that of his father. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

II. HEZEKIAH'S COMMAND. Verses 3-9.

3. He in the first year of the reign, in the first month—That is, in Nisan, the first month of the ecclesiastical year, not in the first month of the reign of Hezekiah. How many months he had reigned when, in the first month of the new year, he began his measures of reform remains uncertain.—*Zöckler*. Opened the doors—Caused the ritual service to be resumed. And repaired them—overlaying them with gold plate. See 2 Kings 18. 16.—*Lange*.

The value of genuine religion is high places. The nation of Judah was double-minded. Its citizens seem to have been almost equally divided between the true and the false worship, so that the temper of the king and court in each succeeding reign fixed the dominant worship during that reign. Of what great value, then, to the cause of virtue in all centuries was the accession of the good king Hezekiah! And religion in high places is as valuable to-day as it was then.

It is wise to make a good start early. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

4. Brought in the priests and the Levites—Like all his righteous predecessors on the throne, he relied on his great ecclesiastical body for support in these reformatory measures. The east street—The court of the priests, which fronted the eastern gate of the temple. Assembling the priests and Levites there, he enjoined them to set about the immediate purification of the temple. It does not appear that the order referred to the removal of idols, for objects of idolatrous homage could scarcely have been put there, seeing the doors had been shut up; but in the forsaken and desolate state the temple and its courts had been polluted by every kind of impurity.—*Jamieson*. The phrase is really "*the broad way of the east*," and may refer not to the inner court, but to an open area outside the whole temple building, on the south-east or east. Comp. Ezra 10. 9; Neh. 8. 1, 3, 16.—*Zöckler*.

5. Sanctify now yourselves—An indispensable prerequisite for a worthy and effectual performance of the business of cleansing the temple. Comp. ver. 15; Exod. 19. 10.—*Lange*. Pre-

Authorized Version.

sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the ^afilthiness out of the holy place.

6 For our fathers have trespassed, and done *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned ^aaway their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and ^aturned *their backs*.

7 Also ^athey have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burnt incense nor offered burnt-offerings in the holy place unto the God of Is'ra-el.

8 Wherefore the ^awrath of the LORD was upon Ju'dah and Je-ru'sa-lem, and he hath delivered them to ^atrouble, to astonishment, and to ^ahissing, as ye see with your eyes.

^a That is, idols, etc.—^b Jer. 2, 27; Ezek. 8, 16.—^c Giving the neck.—^d Chap. 28, 24.—^e Chap. 24, 18.—^f Commotion; Deut. 28, 25.—^g 1 Kings 9, 8; Jer. 18, 16; 19, 8; 25, 9, 12; 29, 18.

Revised Version.

yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD, the God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the sight of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned 7 their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt-offerings in the holy place unto the God of Is'ra'el. Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Ju'dah and Je-ru'sa-lem, and he hath delivered them to be ^atossed to and fro, to be an astonishment, and a hissing, as ye see

^a Or, a terror.

cisely how far Hezekiah's meaning would accord with our own, were we to use his phrases, it is not easy to determine. But the root idea at all events was the same. The worst people in Israel, practically, during the long struggle between Baal and Jehovah, were not Baal's honest champions (who came originally from Tyre), but the easy-going multitude, who were by turn pagans and true worshippers. If it had not been for them idolatry would have been soon rooted out. Now that the reform was again begun, there must be no half-hearted service among the reformers. They must be wholly consecrated to this work. Sanctify the house of the Lord—More than once idolatrous courses had been pursued in Jehovah's sanctuary. Hezekiah would have his renovation complete. Filthiness may refer to pagan attachments. Holy place—The sanctuary; the temple proper; in distinction from the courts which surrounded it.

Holliness becomes God's house and people. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

6. For our fathers have trespassed—Ahaz and his contemporaries, for the statement in verse 7 suits these only.—Zöckler. Turned away their faces—Both literally and figuratively. They had deserted the historic sanctuary, because their hearts had become estranged from the God of their fathers.

The duty of improving on the records of our fathers. "Our fathers have trespassed," said Hezekiah, and those who heard him doubtless said to themselves, It was your father led them to do so, for Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, was a wicked man; but now the king proposes to mend matters.

7. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and thus of the whole temple, for only through the porch was there access to the holy and most holy place; comp. 28, 24, where also the new altar of burnt-offering erected by Ahaz in the court after the heathenish model is mentioned, which the chronicler, according to our passage ("nor offered burnt-offering"), regarded by no means a lawful place of worship.—Zöckler. Put out the lamps—Which should have been kept constantly alight before the Lord. Have not burned incense nor offered burnt-offerings—The degradation of the nation must have been great when the public worship had been allowed to cease.

8. Wherefore the wrath of the Lord, etc.—Comp 19, 2, 10; 24, 18; 32, 25; and for the following strong terms: trouble (properly, *horror*), astonishment, and hissing, Deut. 28, 25; Jer. 19, 8; 24, 9; 25, 9; Lam. 2, 15, and also chap. 30, 7. As ye see with your eyes—Hezekiah probably refers here chiefly to that dreadful defeat by the Israelites in which a hundred and twenty thousand were slain, and two hundred thousand taken prisoners. See the chapter 28, 6, 8.—Whadon. For years Judah had been as wheat between the upper and nether grindstones,

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
9 For, lo, ¹⁰ our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives <i>are</i> in captivity for this.	9 with your eyes. For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives
10 Now <i>it is</i> in mine heart to make a "covenant with the LORD God of Is-ra-el, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.	10 are in captivity for this. Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Is'rael, that his fierce anger may turn away from us.
11 My sons, ^d be not now negligent: for the LORD hath ¹² chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and ^e burn in-cense.	11 My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to minister unto him, and that ye should be his ministers, and burn incense.

¹⁰Chap. 28. 5, 6, 8, 17.—¹¹Chap. 15. 12.—^dOr, be not now deceived; 1 Cor. 4. 9.—¹²Nam. 3. 6; 8. 14; 16. 2, 6.—^eOr, offer sacrifice.

Egypt and Assyria crushing it between them. There was no room for a monarchy between these two embittered rivals. As has been before pointed out in these notes the only time when the Israelitish nation developed any great strength was when for a little more than a century the power of these two nations had simultaneously declined. The most prosperous of the later kings of Judah and Israel purchased their prosperity by temporary alliance with one or the other. So that we can trace the overthrow of Israel and the decline of Judah to natural causes. But that does not exclude God's active participation in all the movements of the day. Divine providence often uses men as its agents who are unconscious of superhuman guidance.

9. Our fathers . . . sons . . . daughters . . . wives—Very skillfully does this young sovereign make the sorrows of his people his own. It was a heart-aching body of men who listened to him.

We should aim to profit by the example of others. Any fool will learn from his own experience; a wise man learns from the experience of others. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. HEZEKIAH'S COVENANT. Verses 10, 11.

10. Now it is in mine heart—Comp. 6. 7; 9. 1; 1 Chron. 22. 7; 28. 2. To make a covenant—To renew the covenant under which the whole people were constantly considered, and of which circumcision was the sign.—*Clarke*.

God is always ready to make and always faithful to keep covenant with his followers.

11. My sons—He would be the "father of his country." Be not now negligent—"Now delay not," or "Withdraw yourselves not." The Lord hath chosen you—An exalted view of life, that all our paths are directed by Jehovah. Serve . . . minister . . . burn—But they had not performed these rites for years. Partly the fault was that of Hezekiah's heathen father; partly it had been their own negligence.

Be not now negligent. Most people are negligent, and if you want to make your mark in the world, be faithful, and the mark will be made deeply. Most of the men whom you have to employ in ordinary life are negligent: the carpenters and printers and shoe-makers and grocers. Orders are forgotten, or misunderstood, or filled too late; and employers are often wronged, not because of swindling propensities, but because of negligence. This is as true of congressmen and kings as of shoe-makers. He that is faithful in little things will be faithful also in much.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Good men often owe much to godly parentage. Ver. 1.—Not long before the death of John Quincy Adams a gentleman said to him: "I have found out who made you." "What do you mean?" asked Mr. Adams. The gentleman replied, "I have been reading the published letters of your mother." "If," this gentleman relates, "I had spoken that dear name to some little boy who had been for weeks away from his mother, his eyes could not have flashed more brightly than did those of that venerable old man when I pronounced the name of his

mother." He stood up in his peculiar manner and said, "Yes, sir; *all that is good in me I owe to my mother.*"

Some one asked a man of wisdom when the education of a child should be begun? "Twenty years before his birth, *by educating his mother,*" was the reply.

One good mother is worth a hundred school-masters.—*George Herbert.*

It is wise to make a good start and an early one. Ver. 3.—That was a good prayer which the old-fashioned Methodist minister offered, "O Lord, start us right, for if we get started wrong we are *hard to turn.*"—*Christian Age.*

Holiness becometh God's house and people. Vers. 5, 7.—A working-man in humble dress saw outside a certain ecclesiastical building "Christ Church" printed up; so in he went. As he was entering a certain pew some one told him it was "rented," and that he could not sit in it. So out he went, saying there was a mistake somewhere, for though it was Christ's church outside he found it was some one else's inside.—*Hooke.*

At a ragged-school for destitute children a clergyman asked the question, "What is holiness?" After some pause a boy in tattered garments jumped up and said, "It's to be clean inside."

The clearest window that was ever fashioned if it is barred by spider's webs and hung over with carcasses of insects so that the sunlight has forgotten its way through, of what use can it be! Now, the church is God's window, and if it be obscured till its light is darkness how great is that darkness!—*Becker.*

We should aim to profit by the example of others. Vers. 8, 9.—A Polish prince was accustomed to carry the picture of his father always in his bosom, and on particular occasions used to take it out and view it, saying, "Let me do nothing unbecoming so excellent a father."

Chastisement rightly received leads men nearer to God. Ver. 10.—*Puycan* writes: "I have been all my life like a child whose father wishes to fix his undivided attention. At first the child runs about the room, but his father ties up his feet; he then plays with his hands until they likewise are tied. Thus he continues to do till he is completely tied up. Then, when he can do nothing else, he will attend to his father. Just so has God been dealing with me until I consented to find my happiness in him alone."

My brother and I were plowing corn on a Kentucky farm. I was driving the horse and he was holding the plow. The horse was lazy, but on one occasion rushed across the field so that I with my long legs could scarcely keep pace with him. I found an enormous chin-fly fastened on him and knocked it off. My brother asked me what I did that for. I told him I didn't want the old horse bitten. "Why," said my brother, "that's all that made him go."—*President Lincoln.*

We should serve God with steady earnestness. Ver. 11.—The late Rev. William Arnot, of Edinburgh, used to tell a story of his being at a railway station when he grew weary of waiting for the train to move. He inquired of one of the train-men what the trouble was, and asked if it was want of water. "Plenty of water," was the quick reply, "But it's no b'illin'." We have no lack of machinery, the engines are on the track and train-men in their places, but our want of progress is because the water's "no b'illin'."—*Dr. Cuyler.*

For more than fifty years John Wesley preached two, and frequently three or four, sermons each day. The whole number during this period amounts to forty thousand. He gave, in addition, innumerable exhortations after preaching. He traveled four thousand five hundred miles every year on an average, and thus at least passed over two hundred and twenty-five thousand miles in his itinerancy. In addition to his numerous writings he had the continual oversight of the churches he had founded.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. Continue the list of the kings of Judah, with a brief characterization of each, as: 9. Amaziah the weak king. 10. Uzziah the leper king. 11. Jotham the obscure king, very little being related concerning his reign. 12. Ahaz the wickedest of all the kings. 13. Hezekiah the best of all the kings. Strange that the worst king should have a son who was the best king! Notice what is said of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18. 5.

2. What was the condition of Judah when Hezekiah ascended the throne? 1.) Its foreign relation; in subjection to the Assyrians, and paying a ruinous tribute. 2.) Its domestic politics; the court broken into three parties, Assyrian, Egyptian, and "home rule." 3.) Its religious

condition; the temple desecrated and closed; idol altars every-where; the priesthood selfish and corrupt. 4.) Its moral condition; universal depravity and wickedness. The state of the nation throws into sublime prominence the character and achievements of Hezekiah.

8. Let us note in a general way the work of Hezekiah as king. 1.) He reformed the religion of the people, abolished idolatry, destroyed the idols (note a remarkable instance, 2 Kings 18. 4), and established the worship of Jehovah. 2.) He corrected the abuses of the government, and gave good laws and a just administration. 3.) He built cities and fortresses, making his kingdom strong. 4.) He awakened the spirit of patriotism, broke from the Assyrian yoke—though with great effort, not at first successful—and at last made Judah independent. 5.) But his highest praise is that he lived in constant and close communion with God.

4. We now come to the immediate lesson, in which we observe certain aspects of Hezekiah in the opening of his reign, as follows:

1.) *His youth*; a young man in his prime. Ver. 1. How splendid the sight of a young man throwing himself with all his energy into the service of God!

2.) *His mother*, perhaps the daughter of a prophet and a descendant of the good priest Jehoiada. Comp. ver. 1 and 2 Chron. 24. 20. Note the influence of a good mother upon her son's career. Through her Hezekiah in youth came into relation with the prophets, and through life was the friend of Israel.

3.) *His standard*. Ver. 2. "That which was right in the sight of the Lord." Every life must have its law, and the law of God is the best.

4.) *His example*. He passed by Ahaz his father, and sought the better example in David his father. Ver. 2.

5.) *His first act*; opening the temple, making religion the foundation of his rule. Ver. 3. Wise is that young man who seeks God's house first of all.

6.) *His insight*. Vers. 4-9. He saw more clearly than most men of his time the true condition of his people, and its real cause in their departure from God.

7.) *His covenant*. Vers. 10, 11. He proposed to bring God's people back to their lost fellowship by renewing their consecration to God.

Here is a noble example for youth. Every young man is a king; let him take this young king for a model.

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LESSON XI.—June 14.

THE BOOK OF THE LAW FOUND.—2 CHRON. 34. 14-28.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.—Psa. 119. 72.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—623 B. C.

PLACES.—The house of the Lord and the royal palace, Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—1. **Hilkiah** the high-priest. The great reformation effected by King Josiah, with the incidents of the solemn passover kept at Jerusalem in the eighteenth year of the king's reign, and the discovery of the Book of the Law, made his official term particularly illustrious. Hilkiah was ancestor of Ezra the scribe. Ezra 7. 1. 2. **Shaphan** the scribe, King Josiah's minister of finance.—*Ewald*. His duties were partially those of a royal secretary. He appears on an equality with the governor of Jerusalem and the royal recorder. He was an old man, probably, when this incident occurred, for his son Ahikam was evidently in a position of importance, and his brilliant and unfortunate grandson Gedaliah was already born.—*Barnes*. 3. **King Josiah** ascended the throne of Judah at the early age of eight. When sixteen he "began to seek after God," and from that time to the end of his life he was the mortal enemy of idolaters. At twenty years of age he inaugurated the most thorough of reformations. In the eighteenth year of his reign and the twenty-sixth of his age, he cleansed and repaired the temple. It was during the progress of this work that the incident of the present lesson occurred. Soon after this a solemn covenant with Jehovah was ratified. Josiah was killed in a battle with Pharaoh-necho 610 B. C. 4. **Ahikam** the son of Shaphan. Evidently a man of noble character. He afterward protected the prophet Jeremiah. Jer. 26. 24; 40. 5. He was father of Gedaliah, who became viceroy of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar. 5. **Abdon** the son of Micoah, probably the same as Achbor named in Jer. 26. 22; 36. 12; and 2 Kings 22. 12. Nothing is known of him besides this incident. 6. **Asaiah**, a servant of the king's, called Asahiah in 2 Kings 22. 12-14. The word "servant" here is equivalent to officer of the court. 7. **Huldah** the prophetess, who is only known from this circumstance. 8. **Shallum**, the son of Tikvath, the son of Haarah, keeper of the wardrobe. Nothing is known of him but the office he held and the woman he married.

PARALLEL PASSAGE.—2 Kings 22.

I. THE BOOK OF THE LAW. Verses 14-27.

14. Fifty-seven years had passed since the death of Hezekiah, during which the land had been twice deluged with all the abominations of idolatry. The temple had been again allowed to fall into decay. King Josiah imitated King Joash in making a general collection of money to restore it. He appointed three high officers as joint superintendents of the repairs: Shaphan the scribe [perhaps a sort of secretary of the treasury]; Maasiah, Governor of Jerusalem; and Joah, the recorder. With these earnestly co-operated Hilkiah the high-priest. The repairers probably found the holy place foul with neglect, the doors shut up, the lamps unlit, no incense within, no sacrifices without. As for "the book of the law," whatever may have been the contents of this copy, rolls containing portions of it would certainly be numerous. In the possession of the priests they might be expected to be found, but only here and there. The copy made (according to the law) for the use of the king would most certainly have perished. We must lay aside, in thinking of this time, all our modern conceptions about books. The priests, in the matter of services and sacrifices in the temple, taught the people by word of mouth what was proper in every part of the ceremonial, and much of the priestly training was traditional, passed on from one generation of priests to another. That an authoritative copy of the law, whatever it may have comprised,

Authorized Version.

14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hil-ki'ah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD *given* by Moses.

15 And Hil-ki'ah answered and said to Sha'phan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hil-ki'ah delivered the book to Sha'phan.

16 And Sha'phan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it.

17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.

Revised Version.

14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hil-ki'ah the priest found the book of the law of

15 the LORD 'given by Mo'ses. And Hil-ki'ah answered and said to Sha'phan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hil-ki'ah delivered the

16 book to Sha'phan. And Sha'phan carried the book to the king, and moreover brought the king word again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it. And they have emptied out the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and into the hand

¹ Deut. 31. 24-28; ² Kings 22. 8.—³ By the hand of.—⁴ To the hand of.—⁵ Poured out, or, mailed.

¹ Heb. by the hand of.—² Or, poured out.

would be supplied for preservation in the temple we certainly might expect, but after nearly sixty years of neglect of the temple services we can feel little surprise that neither Hilkiah nor his fellows were aware of its existence, and that Josiah knew concerning it only what had been taught him by the priests. The half-century previous to Josiah's accession had been a period of utter darkness both for people, priests, and king.—*Lumby*. They—The Levitical servitors. Brought out the money—Handed over to Hilkiah, as their forefathers had handed over to Jehoiada, the contributions made by the people to repair the temple. A book of the law of the Lord given by Moses—That is, the Mosaic law. The whole "Torah" is probably meant, not merely Deuteronomy, as the modern critical school think; and not merely the groups of laws contained in the three middle books of the Pentateuch.—*Zöckler*.

Golden opportunities are often lost by oversight. See ILLUSTRATIONS. "The man who sits down and waits for success will find himself among uncalled-for baggage after the limited express has gone by." Do what lies close at hand.

15. It is noticeable that in the days of both Joash and Josiah the religious reform was pushed by the State—in accordance with the theocratic idea—and the priests, Jehoiada and Hilkiah alike, made their reports of progress to the king's officers. I have found the book of the law—Was this the autograph of Moses? Possibly it was. The rabbins say that Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon endeavored to destroy all the copies of the law, and this only was saved by having been buried under a paving stone.—*Clarke*. In the house of the Lord—In the sanctuary proper, the holy place; probably hidden under rubbish. Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan—As an act of courtly etiquette. Shaphan was the official representative of the crown.

We should personally help to spread the Gospel. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

16, 17. Shaphan carried the book to the king—Somewhat different in the parallel (2 Kings 22. 9), where at first it is only related, "Shaphan the scribe came to the king."—*Zöckler*. Brought the king word back again—He had been sent in the first place by Josiah to supervise the priests and workmen in the temple, and before he announces Hilkiah's discovery he makes his official report. They do it—The work on the temple is progressing satisfactorily. They have gathered together the money—The king's financial plan had proved successful. Have delivered—The distribution of funds had been faithfully attended to, by the priests to the overseers or contractors, and by them to the workmen.

He is a good officer who does exactly what he is told to do.

Authorized Version.

18 Then Sha'phan the scribe told the king, saying, Hil-ki'ah the priest hath given me a book. And Sha'phan read it before the king.

19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.

20 And the king commanded Hil-ki'ah, and A-hi'kam the son of Sha'phan, and Ab'don the son of Mi'cah, and Sha'phan the scribe, and As'a-i'ah a servant of the king's, saying,

21 Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Is'ra-el and in Ju'dah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.

22 And Hil-ki'ah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Hul'dah the prophetess, the wife of Shal'lum the

Revised Version.

18 of the workmen. And Sha'phan the scribe told the king, saying, Hil-ki'ah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Sha'phan read therein

19 before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his

20 clothes. And the king commanded Hil-ki'ah, and A-hi'kam the son of Sha'phan, and Ab'don the son of Mi'cah, and Sha'phan the scribe, and As'a-i'ah the king's servant, saying,

21 Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Is'ra-el and in Ju'dah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according unto all that is written in this book. So Hil-ki'ah, and they whom the king had commanded,

22 went to Hul'dah the prophetess, the

^a In it; Deut. 17, 19; Josh. 1, 8.—^b Deut. 28, 1-6.—^c Gen. 29, 34; Nah. 3, 9; Ps. 94, 18, 19; 119, 120; Jer. 22, 9, 29; Hab. 2, 16.—^d Or, Achbar; 2 Kings 22, 15.—^e 2 Kings 17, 6.—^f Ezech. 15, 29; Judg. 4, 4; Luke 2, 36; Acts 21, 9.

^g In 2 Kings 22, 15, Achbar the son of Micah.

18. Then—After having gone through his routine report. The priest hath given me a book—The cautiousness of his phraseology is noticeable. He is uncertain how the king will receive his announcement. Shaphan read it—Portions of it, doubtless by command. From the account in 2 Kings we learn that he had taken an opportunity to personally examine it, and he doubtless made the most impressive selections.

19. When the king had heard the words of the law—It is manifest that there was in this book something more than the king had known before, from his alarm when he heard it read. He rent his clothes—From what was afterward said by Huldah, it is evident that the portions which affected the king were such passages as Deut. 28. Read in this connection verses 15, 37, and 45 of that chapter.

Sincerity is the basis of success.

A thoroughly honest soul finds plenty of sins to mourn over.

20. See introductory note on PERSONS for information concerning proper names of this verse.

21. Inquire of the Lord—It was Jehovah's messenger Moses who, by his command, wrote these conditional curses. Our nation has met the conditions and are by this book accursed. Go quickly, seek out some other messenger of Jehovah and ascertain whether indeed our penitence and reform have come too late. For them that are left in Israel and in Judah—Literally, "For that which is left;" a significant phrase, like the parallel (2 Kings 22, 18), "for the people and for all Judah."—Zickler. Our fathers have not kept the word—For two generations at the least the retrospect of King Josiah was a very dark one. The reigns of Amon and Manasseh had led the whole people away to idolatry.—Lumby.

In all trouble inquire of the Lord. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

II. THE WORD OF THE LORD. Verses 22-28.

22. Went to Huldah the prophetess—For all the persons here named see introductory note on PERSONS. This is a most interesting circumstance; at this time Jeremiah was certainly a prophet in Israel, but it is likely he now dwelt at Anathoth, and could not be readily consulted; Zephaniah also prophesied under this reign, but probably he had not yet begun; Hilkiah was

Authorized Version.

son of Tik'vath, 'the son of 'Has'rah, keeper of the 'wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Je-ru'sa-lem¹ in the college;) and they spake to her to that effect.

23 And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Is'ra-el, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,

24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I 'will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Ju'dah:

25 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.

26 And as for the king of Ju'dah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Is'ra-el *concerning* the words which thou hast heard;

Revised Version.

wife of Shal'lum the son of 'Tok'-hath, the son of 'Has'rah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Je-ru'sa-lem in the 'second quarter;) and they spake to her to that effect.

23 And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el: Tell ye

24 the man that sent you unto me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of

25 Ju'dah: because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore is my wrath poured out upon this place, and it

26 shall not be quenched. But unto the king of Ju'dah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Is'ra-el: As touching the words

¹ 2 Kings 22. 14.—² Or, Harhas.—³ Garments.—⁴ A Or, in the school, or, in the second part.—⁵ Ch. p. 26. 6, 21; Isa. 6. 6; Jer. 25. 9; Dan. 9. 11, 12, 16; Amos 2. 6; Zech. 1. 4.

¹ In Kings 22. 14, *Tikvah*.—² In 2 Kings 22. 14, *Harhas*.—³ Heb. *Adishrak*.

high-priest, and the priest's lips should retain knowledge; Shaphan was scribe, and must have been conversant in sacred affairs to have been at all fit for his office; and yet Huldah, a prophetess, of whom we know nothing but by this circumstance, is consulted on the meaning of the book of the law; for the secret of the Lord was neither with Hilkiah the high-priest, Shaphan the scribe, nor any other of the servants of the king or ministers of the temple! We find from this—and we have many facts in all ages to corroborate it—that a pontiff, a pope, a bishop, or a priest may, in some cases, not possess the true knowledge of God; and that a simple woman, possessing the life of God in her soul, may have more knowledge of the divine testimonies than many of those whose office it is to explain and enforce them.—*Clarke*. Keeper of the wardrobe—There seems no doubt that the robes here alluded to are the robes of the priests, which are called by the same Hebrew word in Exod. 28. 2, 3, 4; 29. 5, and in many subsequent passages of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.—*Lumby*. In the college—Rather, as in the Revised Version, "in the second quarter." The same phrase occurs in Zeph. 1. 10. It was probably some additional suburban portion of the city. And they spake to her to that effect—Namely, as Josiah had said to them.—*Zöckler*.

23, 24. Tell ye the man that sent you—At first she places king and people all on one level.—*Cambridge Bible*. Thus saith the Lord—A message all the more dreadful in being a confirmation of the written curses. I will bring evil—God stands behind all great providential movements. The drought, the grasshopper, the pestilence, the invading army, are alike his messengers. There is no prosperity or calamity but Jehovah's hand has brought it.

The divine law cannot change. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

25. Because they have forsaken me—This is the immediate or remote cause of every earthly calamity. Provoke me to anger—God indulges in no hasty temper; but his deep loathing of human sin can only be expressed by figuring it under human emotions. My wrath shall be poured out upon this place—As before on several occasions. Shall not be quenched—Utter destruction may be expected now. No further renewal of prosperity.

26, 27. As for the king of Judah—A special message is sent to the king because he had

Authorized Version.

27 Because thine heart was ^atender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard ^athees also, saith the LORD.

28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.

Revised Version.

27 which thou hast heard, because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and hast humbled thyself before me, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof. And they brought the king word again.

^a Ps. 51, 17.—^a Ps. 54, 5; Dan. 2, 2.

already set about a reform and sent to the prophets to obtain divine guidance.—*Lumby*. Because thine heart was tender—Easily touched, susceptible.

God always recognizes contrition. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

28. I will gather thee to thy fathers—During thy life none of these calamities shall fall upon the people, and no adversary shall be permitted to disturb the peace of Judea, and thou shalt die in peace with God. But was Josiah gathered to the grave in peace? Is it not said (2 Kings 23, 29) that Pharaoh-necho slew him at Megiddo? On this we may remark that the Assyrians and the Jews were at peace; that Josiah might feel it his duty to oppose the Egyptian king going against his friend and ally, and endeavor to prevent him from passing through his territories; and that in his endeavors to oppose him he was mortally wounded at Megiddo; but certainly he was not killed there, for his servants put him in his chariot and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died in peace. So that the words of Huldah were literally fulfilled.—*Clarks*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

How many golden opportunities are lost by oversight. Ver. 14.—Goethe has changed the postulate of Archimedes, "Give me a standing-place and I will move the world," into the precept, "*Make good thy standing-place and move the world.*" It was in this way Luther moved the world. Not by waiting for a favorable opportunity, but by *doing his daily work*. We ought not to wait till Blücher comes up, but the moment we catch sight of him in the distance rise and charge.—*Hare*.

We should personally help to spread the good news of the Gospel. Ver. 15.—At a missionary meeting, where a number of colored people were present, the hymn, "O'er the hills of darkness," was sung while the collection was being taken. One woman was very energetic in the line "Fly abroad, thou mighty Gospel," but shut her eyes when the box came near. An old negro who was collecting, seeing this, said, "It's no use singin' 'Fly 'broad' 'cept you give something to help find wings to fly with. And," said he, giving her a nudge with the box, "put a feather in his wings."—*Artliff*.

In all trouble inquire of the Lord. Ver. 21.—Many of our troubles are God dragging us, and they would leave if we would stand upon our feet and go whither he would have us.—*Beecher*.

When we first projected the Soldiers' Institute in Portsmouth, England, Miss Robinson came to me in despair. With scanty funds and stormy opposition the look-out was dark. We knelt down and prayed "that if it was His will he would give us means to stay the flood of iniquity that was sweeping away his work in the army." The answer to that prayer was seventy-five thousand and nine dollars.—*Miss Ellice Hopkins*.

Wealey was one day walking with a Christian man, who related his troubles and did not

know what to do. They happened to pass a stone fence over which a cow was looking. "Do you know," asked Wesley, "why that cow looks over that wall?" "No," replied his friend. "Because," said Wesley, "she cannot look through it. That is what you must do with your troubles; look over them."

The divine law cannot change. Ver. 24.—The Roman noblemen could give no greater proof of their confidence in their city and army than when they bought the ground on which their Carthaginian enemies were encamped around the city. So, whatever appearances indicate, we trust in that which cannot fail, though "heaven and earth pass away."

There is higher law than the Constitution.—*Seward.*

God always recognizes contrition. Ver. 27.—When a man undertakes to repent toward his fellow-men it is repenting straight up a precipice; when he repents toward law, it is repenting into the crocodile's jaws; when he repents toward public sentiment, it is throwing himself into a hedge of thorns; but when he repents toward God, he repents toward all love and delicacy. God receives the soul as the sea the bather, to return it whiter than he took it.—*Beecher.*

Late repentance is seldom true, but true repentance is never late.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **Connecting links.** 1.) *Manasseh, the fourteenth king*; longest in reign; following the example of his grandfather Ahaz, not his father Hezekiah; brought the kingdom very low. 2.) *Amon, the fifteenth king*; a youth; short reign; general depravity in the land.

2. **Condition of the kingdom.** The reforms of Hezekiah, however earnest, were only on the surface; the great mass of Judah remained corrupt. Hence the people dropped back into idolatry and immorality under Manasseh, and sank lower than ever before.

3. **Conversion of Josiah. Ver. 3.** This took place at the age of sixteen years, and was followed by the most thorough reformation that had ever been attempted in Judah. Observe how great may be the results when one young man consecrates himself to God.

4. **Finding the book.** Describe, or call forth from the class, a description of the finding of the Book of the Law. Show the appearance of an ancient manuscript roll. See the notes, and state what part of the Bible this was. As an illustration, Martin Luther finding the Bible in the library of the monastery.

5. **Reading the law.** Show the effect upon the king. Imagine how the Bible would affect us if we heard it for the first time, yet knowing that it was God's message. When "the chained Bible" was read in the churches of England during the Reformation, crowds of people would listen for hours, and when the reader paused for weariness, they would call out: "Read on! read on!" Let us appreciate our privilege in having the Bible in our homes.

6. **Prophetic warnings.** Describe the visit to the prophetess, and her prediction concerning the land and the king. Show how these were fulfilled. We are not to regard the life of Josiah as a failure. He died like a king in defense of his country; and the results of his work were a new and better Judah among the captives. Ezra and Nehemiah, Haggai and Malachi, were the spiritual descendants of Josiah. No man lives or dies in vain who lives for God and dies in his service.

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LESSON XII.—June 21.

CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.—2 KINGS 25. 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Come, and let us return unto the Lord.—Hos. 6, 1.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—588 B. C.

PLACES.—1. Jerusalem. 2. Babylon. 3. The Plain of Jericho.

PERSONS.—1. Nebuchadnezzar, the son and successor of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Babylonian Empire. He ascended the throne B. C. 604. 2. Zedekiah, the vassal king of Judah.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Incensed by the revolt of Zedekiah, the Assyrian despot determined to put an end to the perfidious and inconsistent monarchy of Judah. This chapter narrates his third and last invasion, which he conducted in person, at the head of an immense army, levied out of all the tributary nations under his sway. Having overruled the northern parts of the country and taken almost all the fenced cities (Jer. 34. 7), he marched direct to Jerusalem to invest it. The date of the beginning as well as of the end of the siege is here carefully marked (comp. Ezek. 24. 1; Jer. 39. 1; 52. 4-6); from which it appears that, with a brief interruption, the siege lasted a year and a half. So long a resistance was owing, not to the superior skill and valor of the Jewish soldiers, but to the strength of the city fortifications, on which the king too confidentially relied. Comp. chaps. 21. 37, 38.—*Jamieson*. The siege of Jerusalem began early in January, 589.—*Lenormant*. During this siege the serfs were manumitted, that they might help in the defense. Jer. 34. The Egyptians advanced to the relief of Jerusalem, the Chaldeans turned to meet the attack, and the hopes of the Jews revived so far that the freedmen were once more enslaved. This diversion, however, produced no effect. It is uncertain whether a battle was really fought and lost by the Egyptians (*Josephus, Antiquities*, X, vii, 8), or whether they retreated without fighting at all. In 588 a breach was made and the Chaldeans entered the city (25. 3 and 4). Zedekiah fled (25. 4), hoping to break through the investing lines, but he was captured and taken to Riblah (25. 6), where Nebuchadnezzar was encamped. His sons were slain before his eyes. He was then blinded and taken captive to Babylon. One month later (25. 8; comp. 25. 3), Nebuzar-adan was deputed to carry out the systematic destruction of Jerusalem, and the deportation of the most influential of its population. This he did thoroughly, though not without some slight leniency. Chap. 25. 12-22. However, the fanaticism of Ishmael and his party destroyed the last hope of maintaining the Jewish nationality, even in the pitiful form in which the Chaldeans had yet spared it (25. 25). The history of Judah, from this time on, is merged in that of the great world-monarchies.—*Sumner*.

Authorized Version.

1 And it came to pass ¹in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Neb'u-chad-nez'zar king of Bab'y-lon came, he, and all his host, against

Revised Version.

1 ¹And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Neb'u-chad-nez'zar king of Bab'y-lon came, he and all his army, against

¹ 2 Chron. 36. 17; Jer. 34. 2; 39. 1; Ezek. 24. 1.¹ See 2 Chron. 36. 17-20.

I. THE CITY. Verses 1-3.

1. In the ninth year of his reign—That is, of Zedekiah's reign. How long before this the neglect to pay the tribute, which was the usual indication of disaffection, had gone on we are not told. The Babylonian power might overlook the first omission, but not the second. So we may date the determination to revolt from about the seventh year of Zedekiah's reign.—*Lumby*.

Authorized Version.

Je-ru'sa-lem and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zed'e-ki'ah.

3 And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city,

Revised Version.

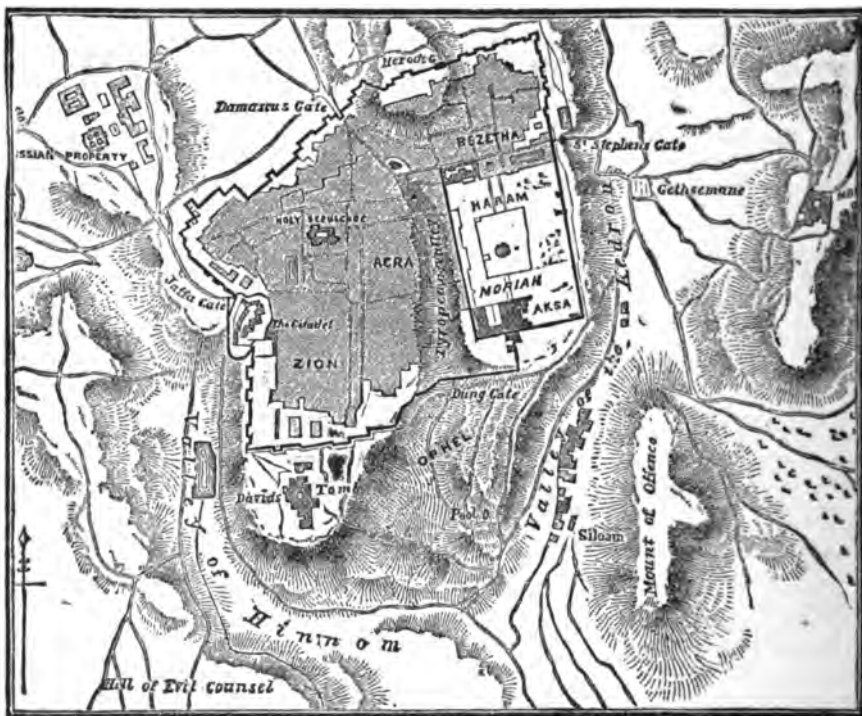
Je-ru'sa-lem, and encamped against it; and they built forts against it round about. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zed'e-ki'ah.

3 On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was sore in the city, so

Pitched against it; and . . . built forts—Rather, perhaps, *drew lines of circumvallation*, with a ditch to prevent any going out of the city. On this rampart were erected his military engines for throwing missiles into the city.—*Fausset*.

The lust of conquest begets trouble. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

'2. Unto the eleventh year—The siege lasted in all one year, five months, and twenty-seven days, for the city was very strongly fortified. 2 Chron. 32. 5; 33. 14.—*Lange*. The natural strength of the position of Jerusalem must have been very considerable for such a rabble as re-



MAP OF MODERN JERUSALEM.

mained to be able to hold out nearly two years against the forces of Babylon. We know, however (Jer. 34. 7), that Nebuchadnezzar's troops were engaged at the same time in attacking Lachish and Azekah. So that a part only of his soldiers were employed against Jeru-salem.—*Lumby*.

3. On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed—its horrors are evidenced in Ezek. 5. 10; Lam. 2. 11, 12, 19; 4. 8-10. See also Baruch 2. 3, and Jer. 37. 21.—*Terry*. Under the maddening influence of hunger the most inhuman atrocities were perpetrated.

This was a fulfillment of the prophetic denunciations because of the apostasy of the chosen people. Lev. 26. 29; Deut. 28. 53-57; Jer. 15. 2; 27. 13; Ezek. 4. 16.—*Fausset*. The famine did not begin

Authorized Version.
and there was no bread for the people of the land.

4 And the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chal-dees' *were* against the city round about:) and *'the king* went the way toward the plain.

5 And the army of the Chal-dees' pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jer'i-cho: and all his army were scattered from him.

Revised Version.
that there was no bread for the peo-

4 ple of the land. Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden: (now the Chal-de'ans were against the city round about:) and *the king* went by 5 the way of the Ar'a-bah. But the army of the Chal-de'ans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jer'i-cho: and all his army

2 Jer. 39. 4; 52. 7; Ezek. 12. 12.

on the ninth day of the fourth month, but had become so severe that the people were no longer capable of making a strong resistance, so that on that day the enemy was able to storm the city.—*Bähr*.

Hunger is the worst enemy men have to fight. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

II. THE KING. Verses 4-7.

4. The city was broken up—Rather, a breach was made in the city. The old phrase "broken up" was the same in sense as "broken through." See 2 Chron. 24. 7; Jer. 39. 8; Mic. 2. 13; Matt. 24. 43; Mark 2. 4.—*Cambridge Bible*. This breach was on the north side, for, according to Jer. 39. 3, the leaders of the Chaldean army, when they came in, halted, and seated themselves in "the middle gate," that is, in the gate which was in the wall between the upper, southern city (Zion), and the lower, northern city, and which led from one of these to the other. When the king learned of this, he took to flight with his warriors by night. They fled toward the south, because the enemy had penetrated by the north side, and there was no hope of escaping that way, but even on this side they had to fight their way through, for the Chaldeans had invested the entire city. The attempt derived its only hope of success from the darkness, and from the greater weakness of the besieging force on the south side.—*Lange*. The men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden—The king's garden was (Neh. 3. 15) at the Pool of Siloam, that is, at the mouth of the Tyropoeon. A trace of the outermost of these two walls appears to be still extant in the rude pathway which crosses the Tyropoeon, on a mound hard by the old mulberry-tree which marks the traditional spot of Isaiah's martyrdom.—*Robinson*. It is probable that the besiegers had overlooked this pass.—*Fausset*. It was called the gate of the fountain. Neh. 3. 15. Inasmuch as there were cisterns at this point to be protected, and inasmuch also as the formation of the ground made it a convenient place for the enemy to attack (*Thénies*), two walls had been built, between which was this gate. This double wall is mentioned in Isa. 22. 11. The way of the gate is the way through that gate out of the city. It is not quite certain whether the king's garden was inside or outside of this double wall.—*Lange*. Their intention was to cross the Jordan and escape, but they were overtaken near Jericho, six hours' journey from Jerusalem.—*Bähr*. We have a more full account of the events here alluded to in Jer. 39. 5-7.—*Lumby*. The way—By the way. Toward the plain—Of the Arabah. The whole valley, from the sea of Galilee southward to the desert was called by this name. On the character of this flight compare the words of Ezek. 12. 12.—*Cambridge Bible*. "The plain" near Jericho is about eleven or twelve miles broad.

When God means to punish a sinner no wall or weapon avails to protect him. Jer. 46. 6.—See ILLUSTRATIONS under title "Too Late!"

5. The army of the Chal-dees—R. V., Chaldeans. As the troops were all round the city there was very little chance for the king to get away. In his flight he was making for Jordan, thinking pursuit to be more difficult in the mountainous region on the east of the river. But he was overtaken in the plains of Jericho, before the river was reached.—*Lumby*. All his army were scattered—When they discovered that they were pursued, the servants and followers of

Authorized Version.

6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Bab'y-lon^a to Rib'lah; and they^a gave judgment upon him.

7 And they slew the sons of Zed'e-ki'ah before his eyes, and^b put out the eyes of Zed'e-ki'ah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Bab'y-lon.

8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is^c the nineteenth year of king Neb'u-chad-nez'-zar king of Bab'y-lon, came Neb'u-zar'-a'dan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Bab'y-lon, unto Je-ru'-salem:

Revised Version.

6 was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Bab'y-lon to Rib'lah; and they^a gave judgment upon him.

7 And they slew the sons of Zed'e-ki'ah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zed'e-ki'ah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Bab'y-lon.

8 Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of king Neb'u-chad-nez'-zar, king of Bab'y-lon, came Neb'u-zar'-a-dan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Bab'y-

^a Chap. 23. 33.—^a Spoke judgment with him.—^b Made blind; Jer. 39. 7; Ezek. 12. 13.—^c Chap. 34. 12.—^c Or, chief marshal.

^a Or, speak with him of judgment.

Zedekiah probably forsook him, and fled in various directions, leaving him quite alone. *Josephus* says the king was accompanied in his flight by his wives and children, and these probably clung to him to the last.—*Terry*.

6. They took the king, and brought him . . . to Riblah—Nebuchadnezzar, having gone from the siege to oppose the auxiliary forces of Pharaoh-hophra, left his generals to carry on the blockade, he himself not returning to the scene of action, but taking up his station at Riblah, in the land of Hamath. Chap. 23. 33.—*Fausset*. This city, called also Riblathah, was situated on the Orontes, and on the road which led from Palestine to Babylon.—*Cambridge Bible*. They gave judgment upon him—Nebuchadnezzar certainly did not put Zedekiah's sons to death with his own hand; he appointed a tribunal which judged and executed them.—*Lange*. They, the council (Jer. 39. 8, 13; Dan. 6. 7, 8, 13), regarding him as a seditious and rebellious vassal, condemned him for violating his oath, and neglecting the announcement of the divine will, as made known to him by Jeremiah. Comp. Jer. 32. 5; 34. 2; 38. 17. His sons and the nobles who had joined in his flight were slain before his eyes. Jer. 39. 6; 52. 10. In conformity with Eastern notions, which consider a blind man incapable of ruling, his eyes were put out, and, being put in chains, he was carried to perpetual imprisonment in Babylon (Jer. 52. 11), which, though he came to it, as Ezekiel had foretold, he did not see. Jer. 32. 5; Ezek. 12. 13; 17. 16. His daughters had been taken away as captives, according to Jer. 41. 10.—*Fausset*.

7. Bound him with fetters of brass—Literally, double brass.—*Terry*. It probably signifies double fetters. His legs as well as his hands were shackled. There is no need to express the metal of which the fetters were made. In English, on the contrary, we speak of "putting a man in irons," and omit "fetters."—*Lumby*. And carried him to Babylon—The narrative in Jeremiah adds, "and put him in prison till the day of his death." He died in the land of his captivity (Ezek. 12. 13) probably not long after his capture and imprisonment. *Josephus* says he was honored with a magnificent burial.—*Terry*.

Be sure your sin will find you out. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Christianity lessens the horrors of war. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Many parents, by their godless behavior, bring their children into temporal and eternal ruin.

Such children will some day have just cause to cry out against their parents. Sir., xii. 10.—*Starke*.

III. THE PEOPLE. Verses 8-12.

8. On the seventh day of the month . . . came Nebuzar-adan—Comp. Jer. 52. 12. In attempting to reconcile these two passages it must be supposed either that, though he had set out on the seventh, he did not arrive in Jerusalem till the tenth, or that he did not put his orders into execution till that day. His office as captain of the guards (Gen. 37. 36; 39. 1) called him to execute the awards of justice on criminals; and hence, although not engaged in the siege of Jerusalem (Jer. 39. 18), Nebuzar-adan was dispatched to demolish the city. The most eminent of its inhabitants were taken to the king at Riblah (ver. 21) and executed as instigators and abettors of the

Authorized Version.

9 And 'he burnt the house of the LORD, and 'the king's house, and all the houses of Je-ru'sa-lem, and every great ~~man's~~ house burnt he with fire.

10 And all the army of the Chal-dees', that ~~were with~~ the captain of the guard, 'brake down the walls of Je-ru'sa-lem round about.

11 Now 'the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the 'fugitives that fell away to the king of Bab'y-lon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Neb'u-zar-a'dan the captain of the guard carry away.

12 But the captain of the guard left 'of the poor of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen.

Revised Version.

9 lon, unto Je-ru'sa-lem: and he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Je-ru'sa-lem, even every great house, burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chal-de'ans, that were *with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Je-ru'sa-lem round about.

11 And the residue of the people that were left in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Bab'y-lon, and the residue of the multitude, did Neb'u-zar'a-dan the captain of the guard carry away captive.

12 But the captain of the guard left of the poorest of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen.

⁹ Ps. 79. 1.—¹⁰ Amos 2. 5.—¹¹ Neh. 1. 2.—¹² Jer. 22. 9.—
¹⁰ Fallen away.—¹² Chap. 24. 14; Jer. 40. 7.

rebellion, or otherwise obnoxious to the Assyrian government. In their number were Seraiah, the high-priest, grandfather of Ezra (Ezra 7. 1), his sagan, or deputy, a priest of the second order. Jer. 21. 2; 29. 25, 29; 37. 8.—*Fausset*. The slight differences in numbers are easily accounted for when we remember that the Hebrews marked their numbers by letters, and that there is a great similarity between many of the letters of their alphabet.—*Lumby*.

9. Every great man's house burnt he with fire—The Revised Version omits "man's." The expression in 2 Chronicles is "he burnt all the palaces thereof with fire."—*Cambridge Bible*. Thus all the architectural glory of ancient Jerusalem—temple, palaces, and noble edifices—was reduced to a mass of ruins.—*Terry*.

sin leads to temporal as well as eternal ruin. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Our personal observation will doubtless give us many painful examples.

10. Brake down the walls—And in that ruined state they remained till the time of Nehemiah. Neh. 1. 3; 2. 17.

11. Rest of the people . . . in the city—Such warriors and leading citizens as had not attempted to escape. Fugitives . . . to the king of Babylon—Deserters who had gone over to the Chaldeans.—*Terry*. Nebuzar-adan took the residue of the better sort, both those who still were faithful to their country and those who had gone over to the Babylonian side, and the residue of the common folk, who were likely to prove useful in some settlement, and carried both these classes with him.—*Cambridge Bible*.

We must keep faith even with unbelievers and enemies. Josh. 9. 19.

12. Vine-dressers and husbandmen—From these poor no trouble was apprehended, and it was deemed wise to leave those who would cultivate the land in order that the country might not become utterly a desert.—*Terry*. Now that the great houses and their inhabitants were gone, and the craftsmen also, their life became no better than that of the nomads, and the people left behind could only turn to keeping the land in cultivation. Jeremiah (39. 10) calls them "the poor of the people, who had nothing."—*Lumby*.

Riches are sometimes a calamity. Ver. 12. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

The lust of conquest begets trouble. Ver. 1.—*Napoleon*, when he was asked the reason for his constant wars, declared, "Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me."

I saw this very Philip with whom we disputed for sovereignty and empire; I saw him, though covered with wounds, his eye struck out, his collar-bone broken, maimed both in his

hands and feet, still resolutely rush into the midst of dangers, and ready to deliver up to fortune any other part of his body she might desire provided he might live gloriously with the rest of it.—*Demoethenas.*

When flowers are full of heaven-descended dews they always hang their heads; but men hold theirs the higher the more they receive.—*Boscher.*

Of all sins covetousness is the most insidious. It is like the silting up of a river. As the stream comes down from the land it brings with it sand and earth, and deposits these at its mouth, so that by degrees it will block itself up and leave no channel for ships of great burden. By daily deposits it imperceptibly creates a bar which is dangerous to navigation. Many a man when he begins to accumulate blocks up his feeling for others.—*Spurgeon.*

Hunger is the worst enemy men have to fight. Ver. 3.—During the French Revolution hundreds of market-women, attended by an armed mob of men, went to Versailles to demand bread of the National Assembly. They entered the hall. There was a discussion upon the criminal laws going on. A fisherman cried out, "Stop that babbler! that is not the question; the question is about bread!"—*Little.*

When Morales, the painter, was invited by Philip II. to court, he came in such a magnificent costume that the king in anger dismissed him. The next time they met he appeared in a very different dress—poor, old, and hungry—which so touched the heart of the king that he provided him with a revenue which kept him in comfort for all the future. How much more does man's want touch the heart of God!

"Hunger breaks through stone-walls." Nothing can keep back the man who hungers after Christ: he will force his way to the bread of life.—*Spurgeon.*

Too late! Ver. 4.—A great surgeon stood before his class to perform an operation. With strong and gentle hand he did his part of the work successfully, and then turning to his pupils said: "Two years ago a simple operation might have cured this disease. Six years ago a wise way of life might have prevented it. Nature must now have her way. She will not consent to the repeal of her capital sentence." The patient died next day.

An old man said to his pastor: "At seventeen I began to feel deeply, but put it off till settled in life. After marriage I bought a farm and thought it would not suit to become religious till I had paid for it. I resolved to wait ten years. At the end of that time I thought no more about it. I cannot now keep my mind on the subject one moment. *It is too late.*"—*Clerical Library.*

Christianity lessens the horrors of war. Ver. 7.—Rivers move calmer when nearing the sea, and winds subside with the going down of the sun, so as the world's day hastens on it exhibits more of the peace which was heralded by the angels.

The United States has since 1794 twenty-four times sought to settle national differences by arbitration, introducing in all treaties to be made a clause that neither party should go to war without first submitting the case to a court of arbitration.—*Bowes.*

Be sure your sin will find you out. Ver. 7.—Though penalties are long delayed wrong-doing is certain to meet with its appropriate punishment. When the whirlwind sweeps through the forest, at its first breath the giant tree falls to crashing the ground. But it was twenty years preparing for this fall. Twenty years before it received a gash. Twenty years before water settled at some crotch and sent decay to the heart of the tree. The work of death progressed till it stood all rottenness and fell in the first gale.—*Beecher.*

The Bank of France has an invisible "studio" in a gallery behind the cashiers, so that at a signal from one of them, any suspected customer can instantly have his picture taken without his own knowledge. So sins are registered, whether the sinner is conscious or not.

Sin leads to temporal as well as eternal ruin. Ver. 9.—Walking in the country, I went into a barn where I found a thresher at work. I addressed him in the words of Solomon: "In all labor there is profit." Leaning upon his flail, he answered, with great energy: "Sir, that is the truth; but there is one exception to it; I have labored long in the service of sin, but I have got no profit by my labors."—*Jay.*

Riches are sometimes a calamity. Ver. 12.—When Mr. Locke first came over from Italy old Dr. Moore was crying up his paintings and asked me if I did not think he would make a great painter. I said, "No, never!" "Why not?" "Because he has thirty thousand a year."—*Northcote.*

John Wesley remarked in early life that he had known but four men who had not declined

in piety by becoming wealthy; at a later period he corrected the remark and *mado no exceptions.*—*Slovens.*

I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue; the Roman word is better—*impedimenta*; for as the baggage is to the army so is riches to virtue; it cannot be spared nor left behind, but it hindereth the march or loseth the victory. It has no real use but distribution; the rest is conceit.—*Bacon.*

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **The last kings of Judah.** There was a Jewish legend that the last drops in the "horn of oil" used in the anointing of the kings fell on the head of Josiah. Certain it is that his successors did not share his spirit. *Jehoahaz*, seventeenth king; three months; carried a captive to Egypt. *Jehoiakim*, eighteenth king; eleven years; died or was murdered during the first siege of Jerusalem. *Jehoiachin* or *Jechoniah*, nineteenth king, three months; carried captive to Babylon. *Zedekiah*, twentieth king; eleven years; blinded and taken captive to Babylon.

2. **The rise of Babylon.** A new name arrests attention, "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon," and brings to notice the great change in the Oriental world. Assyria has fallen, Nineveh has been destroyed, and a new empire has arisen from its ruins. Babylon is now "the lady of kingdoms." The Assyrian Empire had destroyed Israel; the Babylonian Empire was to destroy Judah.

3. **Causes of the captivity.** 1.) The overshadowing power of Babylon, and conquests of Nebuchadnezzar. 2.) The disloyalty of Jewish kings to the "great king" of Babylon; constantly rebelling and seeking aid from Egypt. 3.) The political necessity of making safe and secure the frontier of the empire toward Egypt, compelling the deportation of the Jews. 4.) The continued wickedness of Judah. The idolatrous element was swept away, and the religious part of the people carried into captivity.

4. **Destruction of the kingdom.** Note the earlier captivity in the reign of Jehoiakim, 600 B. C., from which the "seventy years" begin; and the later captivity in the reign of Zedekiah, described in the lesson, 588 B. C. Its immediate cause was the rebellion of Zedekiah after he had promised submission to Nebuchadnezzar. Describe its events as related in the lesson and in parallel passages. Show how all this was the result of forsaking God. Note in the lesson: 1.) The siege. 2.) The famine. 3.) The king's flight. 4.) The king's fate. 5.) The destruction of the city. 6.) The captivity of the people.

5. **The captivity a blessing.** There were two Judahs, as there had been two Israels; the idolatrous mass, and the godly "remnant." The mass was destroyed and slain; the remnant was carried into captivity. Their lives were preserved; they were kept together; they continued faithful to God's service (notice some of the psalms of the captives, Psa. 126, 137, 42), and they were the holy seed which in due time came back to rebuild Jerusalem and re-establish God's cause. So trial ever proves a blessing to those who are faithful.

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LESSON XIII.—June 28.

TEMPERANCE LESSON.—ISA. 28. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?—1 Cor. 6. 9.

TIME.—About 725 B. C.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

LESSON STATEMENT.

The twenty-eighth chapter of the book of Isaiah is one of the greatest of his prophecies. It is distinguished by that regal versatility of style which places its author at the head of Hebrew writers. Some time when the big black cloud was gathering on the north, Isaiah raised his voice to the magnates of Jerusalem: "Lift your heads from your wine-bowls; look north. The sun-shine is still on Samaria, and your fellow-drinkers there are reveling in security. But the storm creeps up behind. They shall certainly perish soon; even you cannot help seeing that. Let it scare you, for their sin is yours, and that storm will not exhaust itself on Samaria. Do not think that your clever policies, alliance with Egypt, or the treaty with Assyria herself shall save you. Men are never saved from death and hell by making covenants with them. Scorners of religion and righteousness, except ye cease being skeptical and drunken, and come back from your diplomacy to faith and reason, ye shall not be saved! This destruction that looms is going to cover the whole earth. So stop your running to and fro across it in search of alliances. *He that believeth shall not make haste.* Stay at home and trust in the God of Zion, for Zion is the one thing that shall survive."—G. A. Smith.

Authorized Version.

1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

a Broken.

Revised Version.

1 Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flowing of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley of them that are overcome with

¹ Heb. smitten down.

I. THE FADING FLOWER. Verses 1-4.

1. Crown of pride, to the drunkards—Hebrew for "*proud crown of the drunkards*," etc. (*Horsley*), namely, Samaria, the capital of Ephraim, or Israel. Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower—It was the custom at feasts to wreath the brow with flowers; so Samaria, "which is (not as in the English version, which are) upon the head of the fertile valley," that is, is situated on a hill surrounded with the rich valleys as a garland (1 Kings 16. 24); but the garland is "fading," as garlands often do, because Ephraim is now close to ruin (comp. chap. 16. 8): fulfilled 721 B. C. 2 Kings 17. 6, 24.—*Flusset*. They had always been hard drinkers in north Israel. Fifty years before Amos flashed judgment on those who trusted in the mount of Samaria, "lolling upon their couches and gulping their wine out of basins," women as well as men. Upon these same drunkards of Ephraim, now soaked and stunned, Isaiah fastens his woe. Sunny the sky and balmy the air in which they lie, stretched upon flowers by the heads of their fat valleys—a land that tempts its inhabitants with the security of perpetual summer. But God's swift storm drives up the valley—hail, rain, and violent streams from every gorge. Flowers, wreaths, and pampered bodies are trampled in the mire. The glory of sunny Ephraim is as the first ripe fig a man findeth, and "while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up." Ver. 4. But while drunken magnates and the flowers of a rich land are swept away, there is a residue who can and do abide even that storm, to whom the Lord himself shall be for a crown, "a spirit of justice to him that sitteth for justice, and for strength to them that turn back the battle at the gate." Ver. 6.—*Expositor's Bible*.

Authorized Version.

2 Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, ¹which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down the earth with the hand.

3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of E'phra-im, shall be trodden ²under feet:

4 And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer; which ³when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he ⁴eateth it up.

5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

6 And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

Revised Version.

2 wine! Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one; as a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, as a tempest of mighty waters overflowing, shall he cast down to the earth ²with

3 the hand. The crown of pride of the drunkards of E'phra-im shall be

4 trodden under foot: and the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the firstripe fig before the summer; which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his

5 hand he eateth it up. In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty,

6 unto the residue of his people: and for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn back the battle ³at

¹ Chap. 30. 30; Ezek. 13. 11.—² With feet.—³ Swalloweth.

² Or, with violence.—³ Or, to.

2. The Lord hath a mighty and strong one—The Assyrian. Chap. 10. 5. All earthly powers are mere tools or weapons in the hand of the Lord. Tempest . . . storm, . . . flood—See note on verse 1. After an Assyrian army had devastated a land it was a waste.

4. While it is yet in his hand—Immediately, without delay; describing the eagerness of the Assyrian Shalmaneser, not merely to conquer, but to destroy utterly, Samaria; whereas other conquered cities were often spared.—*Fausset*.

II. THE CROWN OF GLORY. Verses 5-13.

5. The residue—Primarily, Judah, in the prosperous reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18. 7), antitypically, the elect of God: as he is here called their "crown and diadem," so are they called His (chap. 62. 3); a beautiful reciprocity.—*Fausset*.

6. The lesson of Tennyson's "Vision of Sin," and of Arnold's "New Sirens," that night and frost, decay and death, come down at last on pampered sense, is necessary, but not enough. Who stops there remains a defective and morbid moralist. When you have made the sensual shiver before the disease that inevitably awaits them, you must go on to show that there are men who have the secret of surviving the most terrible judgments of God, and lift their figures, calm and glorious, against the storm-washed sky. Preach the depravity of men, but never apart from the possibilities that remain in them. It is Isaiah's health as a moralist that he combines the two. No prophet ever threatened judgment more inexorable and complete than he. Yet he never failed to tell the sinner how possible it was for him to be different. If it were necessary to crush men in the mud, Isaiah would not leave them there with the hearts of swine. But he put conscience in them, and the envy of what was pure, and the admiration of what was victorious. Even as they wallowed he pointed them to the figures of men like themselves, who had survived and overcome by the Spirit of God. Here we perceive the ethical possibilities that lay in his fundamental doctrine of a remnant. Isaiah never crushed men beneath the fear of judgment without revealing to them the possibility and beauty of victorious virtue. Had we lived in those great days what a help he had been to us—what a help he may be still!—not only firm to declare that the wages of sin is death, but careful to effect that our humiliation shall not be despair, and that even when we feel our shame and irretrievableness the most, we shall have the opportunity to behold our humanity crowned and seated on the throne from which we had fallen, our humanity driving back the battle from the gate against which we had been hopelessly driven! This sixth verse sounds like a trumpet in the ears of enervated and despairing men.—*Expositor's Bible*. Jehovah will inspire their magistrates with justice, and their soldiers with strength of spirit. Turn the battle to the gate—The defenders of their country, who not only repel the

Authorized Version.

7 But they also ¹have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; ²the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

8 For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, *so that there is no place clean.*

9 Whom ¹shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand ²doctrine? *them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

10 For precept ¹must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and there a little:*

11 For with ¹stammering lips and

Revised Version.

7 the gate. But these also ¹have erred through wine, and through strong drink ²are gone astray; the priest and the prophet ³have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are gone astray through strong drink; they ⁴err in vision,

8 they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness,

9 *so that there is no place clean.* ⁵Whom will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the ⁶message? *them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts?*

10 For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; ⁷line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little.

11 ⁸Nay, but by *men of strange lips and*

² Prov. 30. 1; Hos. 4. 11.—³ Chap. 26. 10, 12.—⁴ Jer. 6. 10.
⁵ The hearing.—⁶ Or, hath been.—⁷ Stammerings of lips;
1 Cor. 14. 21.

⁴ Or, reel.—⁵ Or, stagger.—⁶ Or, reel.—⁷ Or, reel.—⁸ Or,
Whom shall he teach . . . and whom shall he make . . . pronounce.
For, etc.—⁹ Or, report.—¹⁰ Or, rule.—¹¹ Or, For which, stammering lips.

foe from themselves, but drive him to the gates of his own cities. 2 Sam. 11. 23; 2 Kings 18. 8.—*Fausset.*

7. Though Judah is to survive the fall of Ephraim, yet "they also" (the men of Judah) have perpetrated like sins to those of Samaria (chap. 5. 8, 11), which must be chastised by God. Erred . . . are out of the way . . . stagger . . . reel—Repeated, to express the frequency of the vice. Judgment—The priests had the administration of the law committed to them. Deut. 17. 9; 19. 17. It was against the law for the priests to take wine before entering the tabernacle. Lev. 10. 9; Ezekiel 44. 21. Here the drunkards are introduced as scoffingly commenting on Isaiah's warnings: "Whom will he (does Isaiah presume to) teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand instruction? Is it those (that is, does he make us to be) just weaned, etc.? For (he is constantly repeating, as if to little children) precept upon precept," etc. *Fausset.*

9, 10. God's ways with men are mostly commonplace; that is the hardest lesson we have to learn. The tongue of conscience speaks like the tongue of time, prevaillingly by ticks and moments; not in undue excitement of soul and body, not in the stirring up of our passions nor by enlisting our ambitions, not in thunder nor in startling visions, but by every-day precepts of faithfulness, honor, and purity, to which conscience has to rise unwinged by fancy or ambition and dreadfully weighted with the dreariness of life. If we, carried away upon the rushing interests of the world, and with our appetite spoiled by the wealth and piquancy of intellectual knowledge, despise the simple admonitions of conscience and Scripture as uninteresting and childish, this is the risk we run—that God will speak to us in another, and this time unshirkable, kind of commonplace. What that is we shall understand when a career of dissipation or unscrupulous ambition has bereft life of all interest and joy, when one enthusiasm after another grows dull, and one pleasure after another tasteless, when all the little things of life preach to us of judgment and the grasshopper becometh a burden, and we, slowly descending through the drab and monotony of decay, suffer the last great commonplace, death.—*Expositor's Bible.* Line—A rule or law. (Maurer.) The repetition of sounds in Hebrew, *tsav, tsav, tsav, tsav, tsav, tsav, tsav, tsav*, expresses the scorn of the imitators of Isaiah's speaking; he spoke stammering. Ver. 11. God's mode of teaching offends by its simplicity the pride of sinners. 2 Kings 5. 11, 12; 1 Cor. 1. 23. Stammerers as they were by drunkenness, and children in knowledge of God, they needed to be spoken to in the language of children and "with stammering lips." Comp. Matt. 13. 13. A just and merciful retribution.—*Fausset.*

11. For—Rather, truly. This is Isaiah's reply to the scoffers: Your drunken questions shall

Authorized Version.

another tongue^a will he speak to this people.

12 To whom he said, This^a is the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.

13 But ~~the~~ word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem.

15 Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.

16 Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation^a a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner

Revised Version.

with another tongue will he speak to

12 this people: to whom he said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing:

13 yet they would not hear. Therefore shall the word of the LORD be unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

14 Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this

15 people which is in Je-ru'-sa-lem: Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with¹² hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves; therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I¹³ lay in Zi'on for a foundation

^a Or, he hath spoken.—¹² Chron. 14. 17.—¹³ Gen. 49. 24; Ps. 118. 27; Matt. 21. 43; Acts 4. 11; Rom. 9. 33; 10. 11; Eph. 2. 20, 1 Pet. 2. 6, 7, 8.

¹² Heb. *Shool*.—¹³ Or, *have laid*.

be answered by the severe lessons from God conveyed through the Assyrians and Babylonians; the dialect of these, though Semitic, like the Hebrew, was so far different as to sound to the Jews like the speech of stammerers. Comp. chap. 38. 19; 36. 11. To them who will not understand God will speak still more unintelligibly.—*Fausset*.

III. THE SURE FOUNDATION. Verses 14-17.

14. To Isaiah's threats of destruction the politicians of Jerusalem replied, We "have bought destruction off!" They meant some treaty with a foreign power. Diplomacy is always obscure, and at that distance its details are buried for us in impenetrable darkness. But we may safely conclude that it was either the treaty of Ahaz with Assyria or some counter-treaty executed with Egypt since this power began again to rise into pretentiousness, or, more probably still, it was a secret agreement with the southern power while the open treaty with the northern was yet in force. Isaiah, from the way in which he speaks, seems to be in ignorance of all, except that the politician's boast was an unhallowed, underhand intrigue, accomplished by much swindling and false conceit of cleverness. This wretched subterfuge Isaiah exposes in some of the most powerful sentences he ever uttered. A faithless diplomacy was never more thoroughly laid bare in its miserable mixture of political pedantry and falsehood.—*Expositor's Bible*.

15. *Covenant*—There may be a tacit reference to their confidence in their "covenant" with the Assyrians in the early part of Hezekiah's prosperous reign, before he ceased to pay tribute to them, as if it insured Judah from evil whatever might befall the neighboring Ephraim. Ver. 1. The full meaning is shown by the language ("Covenant with death—hell," or *sheol*) to apply to all lulled in false security spiritually (Psa. 12. 4; Eccl. 8. 8; Jer. 8. 11); the godly alone are in covenant with death. Job 5. 23; Hos. 2. 18; 1 Cor. 8. 22.—*Fausset*. *Overflowing scourge*—Two metaphors. Through—Namely, through Judah on their way to Egypt, to punish it as the protector of Samaria. 2 Kings 17. 4.—*Jamieson*.

16. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation
16

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
<p>stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.</p>	
<p>17 Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.</p>	<p>17 a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. And I will make judgment the line, and righteousness the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.</p>
<p>18 And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.</p>	<p>18 the hiding-place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with "hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.</p>
<p>A A treading down to it.</p>	<p>16 Heb. Shoel.</p>

a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste—No need of swift couriers to Egypt, and fret and fever of poor political brains in Jerusalem! The word **make haste** is onomatopoeic, like our *fuss*, and, if *fuss* may be applied to the conduct of high affairs of State, its exact equivalent in meaning.—*Expositor's Bible*. Corner-stone (1 Kings 5. 17; 7. 9; Job 38. 6)—The stone laid at the corner where two walls meet and connecting them; often costly. **Make haste**—Flee in hasty alarm; but the Septuagint has "be ashamed;" so Rom. 9. 33, and 1 Pet. 2. 6, "be confounded," substantially the same idea. He who rests on Him shall not have the shame of disappointment, nor flee in sudden panic. See chap. 30. 15; 32. 17.—*Fausset*.

17. **Line**—The measuring line of the plummet. *Horsley* translates: "I will appoint judgment for the rule, and justice for the plummet." As the corner-stone stands most perpendicular and exactly proportioned, so Jehovah, while holding out grace to believers in the foundation stone, will judge the scoffers (ver. 15) according to the exact justice of the law. Comp. Jas. 2. 13.—*Fausset*.

18. **Disannulled**—Obliterated, as letters traced on a waxen tablet are obliterated by passing the stylus over it.—*Jamieson*. **Trodden down**—Passing from the metaphor in "scourge" to the thing meant, the army which treads down its enemies.—*Fausset*.

TEACHING HINTS.

1. **The crown of pride.** Vers. 1-14. Who are so named? What is here said of their beauty? What is to be its fate? How shall that fate be brought to pass? Notice that the pleasure and the glory of all drunkards shall come to naught.

2. **The crown of glory.** Vers. 5, 6. In contrast with the fading glories of pleasure stands the crown of glory and the diadem of beauty which come from God. Notice that in these verses God gives to his people, 1) Glory and honor; 2) Beauty of character; 3) Wisdom; 4) Strength and success. What does drink do for men as compared with these blessings?

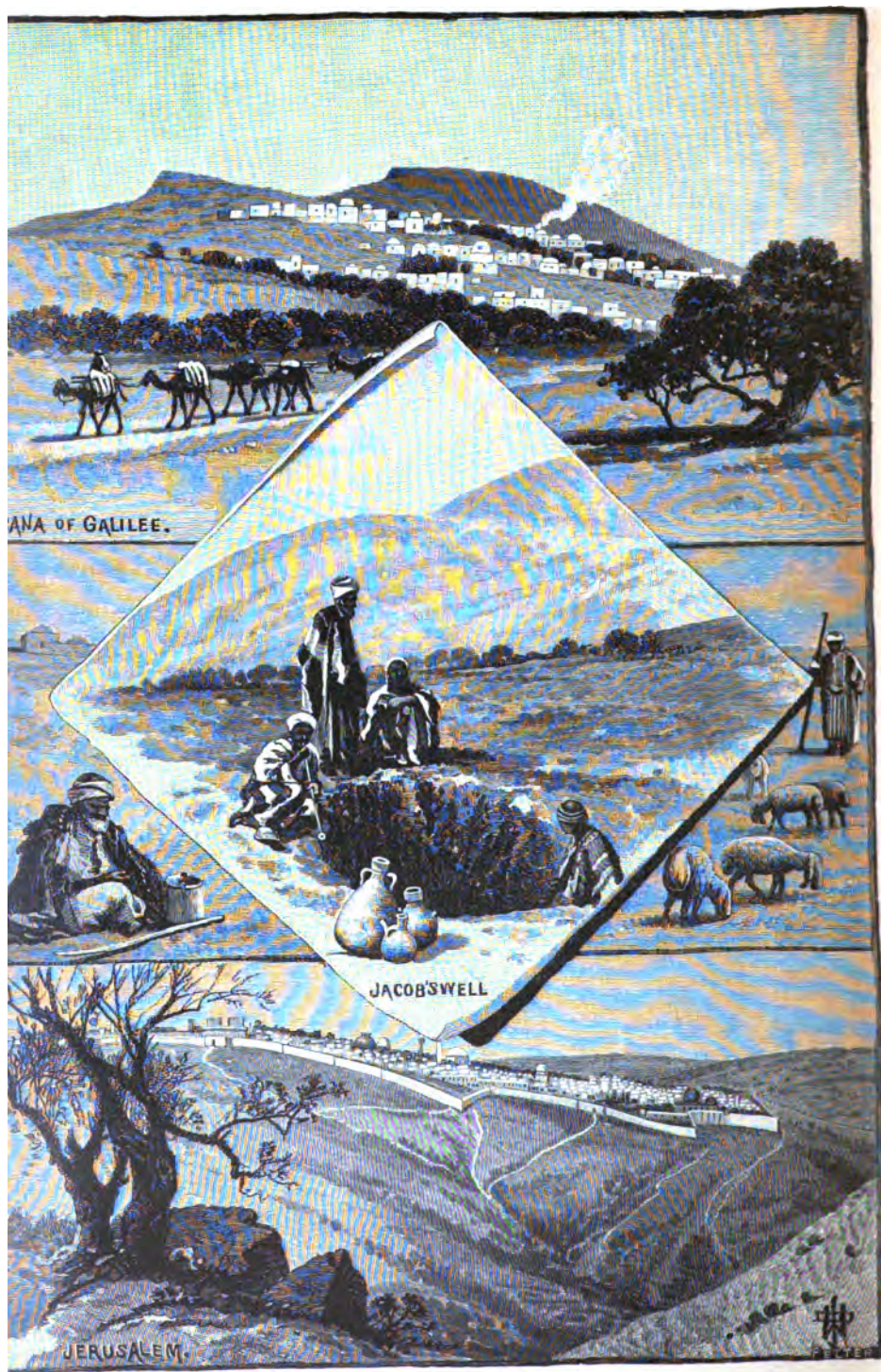
3. **Erring through wine.** Vers. 7, 8. Present the graphic description of the effects of strong drink in these verses. Even the priests and the prophets, men of God, have been led astray through liquor. In our time able ministers and great statesmen have been ruined by strong drink.

4. **The remedy.** Vers. 9-18. It is to teach the children the truth of God and the principles of conduct. "Precept upon precept, line upon line," etc. Verses 11-13 may intimate that inasmuch as the people have refused to hearken to the gentler instructions of God he will now speak to them in another tongue through afflictions and calamities.

5. **The refuge of lies.** Vers. 14, 15. These people had deemed themselves secure in their sins. But their refuge of lies shall be swept away, and their hiding-place overthrown in the storm of God's wrath. So is it ever with those whose trust is in earthly pleasure.

6. **The sure Foundation.** Vers. 16, 17. What is the foundation-stone which is here described? Notice how Paul applies the reference in Eph. 2. 20-22. Christ is the true foundation of character which can never be swept away.

For TEMPERANCE ILLUSTRATIONS see Appendix.



STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.*

LESSON I.—July 5.

THE WORD MADE FLESH.—JOHN 1. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.—John 1. 14.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, it is generally believed, was written long after the other three gospels, about 90 A. D., in the second or third generation of the Christian Church. A new type of man had been developed by the gospel, not Jew nor Roman nor Greek, but blending in one the noblest traits of all. To this new spiritual man, trained under Christianity and able to comprehend divine truth, John wrote the deeper revelation of Christ.—*Hurlbut*. See **INTRODUCTION**, page 18.

LESSON STATEMENT.—The author first introduces the great Personage of his book by setting forth his true divinity, and especially his relations to God before he became manifest to men. Vers. 1, 2. He was supreme and universal Creator (ver. 3), the source and fountain of life and light to men (ver. 4); albeit this light was strangely repelled by a benighted world. Ver. 5. Prominent among the subjects brought forward in this chapter is the mission of John the Baptist as a witness for Christ. Vers. 6-8. Jesus was the true Light of the world, although so strangely repelled by his ancient people. Vers. 9-11. Yet some did receive him, thus becoming sons of God by a birth truly from God. Vers. 12, 13. The divine Word appeared in human form, revealing to men the glory of the Father. Vers. 14, 18. Again the author reverts to the testimony of John the Baptist (ver. 15), and enlarges upon the fullness of grace and truth which comes to men through Christ, other and greater than that which came through Moses. Vers. 16, 17.—*Cowles*. In this Prologue we notice what may be called a spiral movement. An idea comes to the front, like the strand of a rope, retires again, and re-appears later on for development and further definition. Meanwhile another idea, like another strand, comes before us, and retires to re-appear in like manner. Thus the Word is presented to us in verse 1, withdrawn, and again presented to us in verse 14. The creation comes next, in verse 3, disappears, and returns again in verse 10. Then "the Light" is introduced in verse 5, withdrawn, and reproduced in verses 10, 11. Next the rejection of the Word is put before us in verse 6, removed, and again put before us in verses 10, 11. Lastly, the testimony of John is mentioned in verses 6 and 7, repeated in verse 15, taken up again in verse 19, and developed through the next two sections of the chapter.—*Plummer*.

Authorized Version.

1 In the beginning was the Word,

Revised Version.

1 In the beginning was the Word,

¹ Rev. 19, 12.

I. THE WORD WAS GOD. Verses 1-5.

1. In the beginning—Originally, prior to all history.—*Whedon*. Comp. John 17. 24; Eph. 1. 4; and contrast Mark 1. 1, which alludes to the historical beginning of the public ministry of Christ.—*Plummer*. John begins the Gospel where Moses began the Law.—*Abbott*. The reference to the opening words of Genesis is striking when we remember that the Hebrew title of that

* For GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDIES OF THE SECOND SIX MONTHS, see page 18.

Authorized Version.

and the Word was ¹with God, and ²the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Revised Version.

and the Word was with God, and

2 the Word was God. The same was

3 in the beginning with God. All things were made ¹by him; and without him ²was not any thing made that

¹ Zech. 12. 7.—² Isa. 9. 6; chap. 10. 30; Phil. 2. 6; Tit. 2. 13.

¹ Or, through.—² Or, was not any thing made. That which hath been made was life in him; and the life, etc.

Book of Genesis was *bereshith* ("In the Beginning").—*Watkins*. Was—Fix any assignable point as the *beginning*, and the Word *was*, and still *was*. The Word is absolutely eternal. St. Paul calls Christ (Col. 1. 15) "the first-born of every creature," or (more accurately translated) "begotten before all creation." Comp. Heb. 1. 8; 7. 3; Rev. 1. 8.—*Plummer*. See John 8. 59; 17. 6; Prov. 8. 28; 1 John 1. 1; Rev. 3. 14; Phil. 2. 5, 6. The Word—As the human mind manifests itself in the spoken word, so the manifestation of the Eternal Mind is described by John as the Eternal Word. Later, in verses 14 and 18, this Word, by which God manifests his own hidden and unknowable nature, is identified by John as the Messiah. The propriety and beauty of both terms, Word and Son, to designate that in God by which his absolute essence is revealed in the universe, are such that we might suppose them originated by the mind of the evangelist himself, under the guidance of inspiration. But we know, historically, that the term Word is used in a somewhat similar sense in the Old Testament, in the Targums, in the Jewish apocryphal writings, by the Greek philosopher Plato, and by that Greekish Jew Philo.—*Whedon*. And the Word was God—Was truly and essentially divine. Not merely godlike or "divine" in that loose sense in which great men and their great thoughts and deeds are sometimes spoken of. Neither, in the opposite extreme, does the phrase mean that the Word was *the God*—the only God; *the God* in the exclusive sense which should comprise within himself all there is of God. That would nullify what John has just said, "was *with* God," for it would render such a fact impossible. Nor can we translate—the Word was a God—for this would imply an absolutely distinct being—another God—a statement revolting to the whole current of Scripture, both of the Old Testament and the New.—*Cowles*.

2. The same was in the beginning with God—An unfathomable mystery. John here labors to express two conflicting and apparently contradictory ideas, the identity of the Word with God and the individuality of the Word, as distinct from the Infinite and invisible deity. This contradiction subsequent theology has endeavored in vain to eliminate by drawing distinctions between essence and substance, person and being, etc., in such phraseologies as "three in substance and one in essence," or "three persons in one God."—*Abbott*. Some such formulations are needful for the student, who finds the doctrine of the Trinity repeatedly implied in the holy Scripture; but the truth remains that knowledge of the divine nature is too wonderful for us—we cannot attain to it. The Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God; God is one. If you ask me to reconcile these four propositions, I answer, I cannot. We require no one to reconcile the personality of each with the unity of God.—*Chalmers*. I could wish all such extra scriptural phrases, as "three persons" hypostases, etc., to be buried in oblivion, provided only this truth were universally received, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the one God; and that, nevertheless, the Son is not the Father, nor the Spirit the Son, but that they are distinguished from each other by some peculiar properties.—*Calvin*.

God's love is as eternal as his power. "Neither knows measure nor end." These first two verses of the Gospel of Love make plain that the love of the Father for us is beyond measure. Our gratitude for the love of our Saviour should not hide from us the eternal love of God.

3. Without him was not any thing made—Simply an emphatic and exhaustive reiteration, such as is not infrequent in fervid writing. The general teaching of the New Testament represents Christ, both in his earthly life and in his heavenly administration, as always the executor of his Father's will. This is especially prominent in John's gospel (see for example, John 5. 22, 23, 27; 6. 37, 44, 57; 8. 28, 42; 10. 29; 14. 10; 17. 18, 24); but it is equally clearly taught elsewhere. Luke 2. 49; 1 Cor. 15. 27, 28; Phil. 2. 9; Col. 1. 19; Mark 10. 40, etc.—*Abbott*.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.	4 hath been made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
5 And 'the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.	5 And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness 'apprehended
* Chap. 2. 19.	* Or, overcame. See Chap. 12. 25 (Gr.).

4. In him was life—Two of the oldest manuscripts have, "In him *is* life," which is a probable reading. In God "there is no darkness at all." In every man there are rays of light, stronger or feebler, in greater or less darkness. There is a power to see the light, and open his soul to it, and the more he has it still to crave for more. This going forth of the soul to God is the seeking for life. The Word is the going forth of God to the soul. He is *LIFE*.—*Watkins*. He is the great and sole life-giver—the infinite fountain of life. But John's thought is specially upon moral, spiritual life; for he proceeds to say, this life brings *light* to men—not sunlight to the eye of the body, but the light of God to human souls, that light which terminates in salvation as its end. He who first gave physical existence to all that is—vegetable or animal—advances to the analogous yet nobler function of breathing life into souls dead in moral ruin.—*Cowles*. The life was the light of men—Since Christ is Life and Light, any religion which dwarfs men, represses their life, belittles them, and any which shuts them up in darkness and denies them intellectual freedom and progress in any direction, is so far anti-christ. The cause of Christ has nothing to fear from intellectual life or any light of scientific discovery.—*Abbott*.

These verses are all eminently practical, and should be strongly impressed on the mind of every scholar. Christ is God; he is our Maker, and has the most intimate interest in our welfare; our physical, intellectual, and spiritual life is all dependent on him; he is our Light in the fullest sense. See ILLUSTRATIONS entitled "The Works of Christ Attest his Divinity."

5. The light shineth—Now, as of old, the Light shines—in reason, in creation, in conscience, —and shines in vain.—*Plummer*. Darkness—Spiritual and moral darkness. The use of this phrase in a metaphorical sense, is peculiar to John 8. 12; 12. 35, 46; 1 John 1. 6; 2. 8, 9, 11.—*Cambridge Bible*. Comprehended it not—As material light might be supposed to labor to pierce into the dense darkness (for example, of a London fog), but meet only repulsion, so this precious Light from heaven poured itself forth upon the darkness of benighted souls the world over, but alas! this darkness would not admit its heavenly rays.—*Cowles*.

Moral darkness comprehends not the Light of God. True are these words, of patriarch, law-giver, prophet, as they followed the voice which called, or received God's law for men, or told forth the word which came to them from him; true are they of every poet, thinker, statesman, who has grasped some higher truth, or chased some lurking doubt, or taught a nation noble deeds; true are they of every evangelist, martyr, philanthropist, who has carried the light of the Gospel to the heart of men, who has in life or death witnessed to its truth, who has shown its power in deeds of mercy and of love; true are they of the humblest Christian who seeks to walk in the light, and from the sick-chamber of the lowliest home may be letting a light shine before men which leads them to glorify the Father which is in heaven.—*Plummer*. See ILLUSTRATIONS entitled "Light is not Always Welcomed." Apply practically: Does *your heart* receive the Light of God?

The light is ever shining, "ofttimes, indeed, colored as it passes through the differing minds of different men, and meeting us across the space that separates continents, and the time that separates ages, in widely varying hues; but these shades pass into each other, and in the harmony of all is the pure light of truth."

Men are responsible for their rejection of divine Light. While in the material world light naturally penetrates and scatters darkness, and we never think of darkness as making intentional or even natural opposition, it is entirely otherwise in the spiritual world. For here the very mischief, the real virus, of darkness is its moral repugnance to heaven's Light; the alarming and guilty fact being that men love darkness rather than light, and therefore do not make light welcome—not even this glorious Light from heaven, emanating from "the Father of lights," the very God of love.—*Cowles*.

Authorized Version.

6 There ^a was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

8 He ^b was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

9 *That* ^c was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10 He was in the world, and ^d the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

Revised Version.

6 it not. There came a man, sent from

7 God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all

8 might believe through him. He was not the light, but *came* that he might

9 bear witness of the light. ^e There was the true light, *even the light* which lighteth ^f every man, coming into the

10 world. He was in the world, and the world was made ^g by him, and

^a Mal. 3. 1.—^b Acts 12. 25.—^c Isa. 49. 6; 1 John 2. 8.—^d Psa. 22. 6; 1 Cor. 8. 6; Eph. 3. 9; Col. 1. 17; Heb. 1. 2; 11. 3; Rev. 4. 11.

^e Or, *The true light, which lighteth every man, was coming.*—^f Or, *every man as he cometh.*—^g Or, *through.*

II. THE WORD BECAME MAN. Verses 6-13.

6. There was a man—Rather, there *arose* a man, in contrast to the “was” in verse 1. Sent from God—Comp. “I will send my messenger,” Mal. 3. 1: “I will send you Elijah the prophet.” Mal. 4. 5. From the Greek for “send,” *apostello*, comes our word “apostle.”—*Pum-mer*. Whose name was John—The other three evangelists carefully distinguished the Baptist from the son of Zebedee; to the writer of the fourth gospel there is only one John. This in itself is strong incidental evidence that he himself is the other John.—*Watkins*.

7. Came for a witness—Better, *for witness*; that is, to bear witness, not to be a witness. The word “witness” and “to bear witness” are very frequent in St. John’s writings [unfortunately sometimes translated “record,” “testimony,” etc.]. Testimony to the truth is one of his favorite thoughts.—*Pum-mer*. He was not a mere preacher of the law, nor of the duty of repentance, though this is the phase of his ministry most prominent in the reports of Matthew (3. 1-12), and Luke (3. 1-18). He was a forerunner of the great King, sent to bear witness of his approach. And this phase of his ministry, though indicated in the other gospels (Matt. 3. 11; 11. 9; Mark 1. 7, 8; Luke 3. 16, 17), is most clearly brought out in John. Vers. 23, 29-36.—*Abbott*. John, the last of the prophets, was the only living personal *witness* to the living and personal Light. The term Light here becomes personal, and is rightly begun with a capital letter.—*Whedon*.

8. Not that Light—Better, not *the* Light. The Baptist was not the Light, but “the lamp that is lighted and shineth.” At the close of the first century it was still necessary for St. John to insist on this. At Ephesus, where this gospel was written, St. Paul in his third missionary journey had found disciples still resting in “John’s baptism.” Acts 19. 1-6. *Cambridge Bible*.

Christ should be the teacher’s central theme. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

9. That was, etc.—This verse is ambiguous in the Greek. It might be better to translate it—*The true Light, which lighteth every man, was coming into the world; or, There was the true Light which lighteth every man by coming into the world.* “Was” is emphatic; “there the true Light was,” even while men were mistaking the lamp for the Light.—*Watkins*. The word for “true” is remarkable; it seems true as opposed to “spurious,” not true as opposed to “lying.” Every man—God deals with men as individuals, not in masses.

10. Note that the world has not the same meaning in verses 9 and 10. Throughout the New Testament it is most important to distinguish the various meanings of “the world.” It means (1) “the universe;” Rom. 1. 20; (2) “the earth;” 9. 5; Matt. 4. 8; (3) “the inhabitants of the earth;” ver. 29, 4. 42; (4) “those outside the Church,” alienated from God; 12. 31; 14. 17, and frequently. In this verse the meaning passes from “the earth” to “those outside the Church.”—*Pum-mer*. Knew him not—Did not recognize him. Comp. Acts 19. 13. All this refers to the presence of the Word in the world before the advent. Note how the writer amplifies his subject, reiterates and re-arranges his points, to express his amazement at the strange repulsion which this Light from heaven received. He actually came down into this very world in person: indeed the material world was his own creation, and moreover he gave all living men their very being; and



"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US."

Authorized Version.

11 He ^ocame unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But ^{as} many as received him, to them gave he ^opower to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, ^obut of God.

14 And ^othe Word ^owas made ^oflesh, and dwelt among us, (and we ^obeheld

Revised Version.

11 the world knew him not. He came unto ^ohis own, and they that were

12 his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, *even* to them that believe on his

13 name: which were ^oborn, not of ^oblood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of

14 God. And the Word became flesh, and ^odwelt among us (and we beheld

^o Luke 12. 14.—^o Isa. 54. 5; Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 3. 26; 2 Pet. 1. 4; 1 John 2. 1.—^o Or, the right, or, privilege.—^o Deut. 20. 6; chap. 2. 3; Jer. 1. 18; 1 Pet. 1. 21.—^o Matt. 1. 20; 1st Im. 2. 16; 1 John 1. 1.—^o Rom. 1. 3.—^o Heb. 2. 14.—^o Isa. 54. 5; Matt. 17. 2; 2 Pet. 1. 17.

^o Gr. his own things.—^o Or, begotten.—^o Gr. bloods.—^o Gr. eternated.

yet these minds, made intelligent by his own gift, would not know him! He came unto a people specially selected ages before to be his own, and even they did not (as a nation) receive him.—*Cowles*.

11. He came, as distinct from the "was" of the previous verse, passes on to the historic advent.—*Ellicott*. Unto his own—This word is in the plural neuter, and signifies own things, possessions, or properties. The second "own" is in the plural masculine, and signifies his own living beings; that is, men. As the landlord comes to his own estates, but his own tenants receive him not, so the Logos came to his own world of things, and his own world of creatures, men, did not receive him.—*Whedon*. The darkness comprehended not; the world knew not; his own received not.—*Watkins*.

12. But—There were happy exceptions.—*Whedon*. As many as received him—Salvation is conditioned on human will. To them gave he power—Not capability, nor privilege, nor claim, but power and right; the original word combines the two ideas. He confers the power to become the sons of God, and confers the right to claim that privilege.—*Abbott*. This verse does not mean that Christ confers on those who receive him a spiritual and moral strength, by which they convert themselves, change their own hearts, and make themselves God's children.—*Eyle*. To become the sons of God—Sons and therefore (1) partakers of the divine nature (Eph. 4. 13; Heb. 12. 10; 2 Pet. 1. 4); (2) entitled to and walking in freedom as children, not in bondage as servants (chap. 15. 15; Gal. 4. 1-7); (3) heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, his only begotten Son. Rom. 8. 16, 17. But the full conception of the meaning of this sonship we cannot know, till in the other world we see the Father as he is. 1 John 8. 1, 2.—*Abbott*. Even to them that believe on his name—His name is Jesus, that is, Saviour, given to him because he saves his people from their sins. Matt. 1. 21. To have faith in that name is to have faith in him as a personal Saviour from sin. Observe, then, that this verse comprises the whole Gospel in a sentence. It declares (1) *the object* of the Gospel—that we who are by nature the children of disobedience and of wrath (Eph. 2. 2, 3) may become the sons of God; (2) *the source* to which we are to look for this prerogative of sonship—power conferred by God; (3) *the means* by which we are to attain it—personal faith in a personal Saviour from sin. Observe, too, that John follows his description of the rejection of Christ, not by threatening punishment to them, but by depicting the infinite gain of those that accept Christ.—*Abbott*.

13. Which were born (that is, became sons of God), not of blood (not by lineal descent from Abraham, as the Jews of that day assumed); not of (the impulses of) the flesh, as all human births; not of any merely human willings or action, but of God by virtue of his grace alone. The sonship of believers is all of God. As many as receive Christ, God receives into sonship—brethren of Christ.—*Cowles*.

Our nature must be changed by the Spirit of God. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. THE WORD REVEALS THE FATHER. Verses 14-18.

14. And the Word was made flesh—Or, became flesh. The majestic fullness of this brief sentence, which affirms once for all the union of the Infinite and the finite, is absolutely unique.—*Cambridge Bible*. Dwelt among us—Literally, tabernacled among; dwelt as in a tent. The

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full ¹⁶ of grace and truth.	his glory, glory as of "the only begotten from the Father), full of grace
15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for ¹⁷ he was before me.	15 and truth. John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, "This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he
16 And of his ¹⁸ fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.	16 was ¹⁸ before me. For of his fullness we all received, and grace for grace.

¹⁶ Col. 2. 3.—¹⁷ Col. 1. 17.—¹⁸ Eph. 1. 6; Col. 2. 9.

¹¹ Or, an only be:otten from a father.—¹² Some ancient authorities read (this was he that said).—¹³ Gr. first in regard of me.

tabernacle had been the seat of the divine Presence in the wilderness. When God became incarnate in order to dwell among the chosen people "to tabernacle" was a natural word to use.—*Plummer*. **His glory**—The Shekinah. Comp. 2. 11; 11. 40; 12. 41; 17. 5, 24; 2 Cor. 3. 7-18; Rev. 21. 11. Here is probably a special reference to the Transfiguration (Luke 9. 32; 2 Pet. 1. 17); and possibly to the vision at the beginning of the Apocalypse. In any case it is the evangelist's own experience that is indicated. Omit "the" before the second "glory."—*Watkins*. Interpreting to us the moral significance of this word "glory," he says, full of **grace and truth**—"grace" in the sense of kindness, love, favor; and "truth," comprehensively put for the revelations he was evermore making of God and human duty.—*Coules*. **As of**—Exactly like. **The only begotten**—The best beloved. **Of the Father**—Literally, from the presence of a Father; an only Son sent on a mission from a Father. Comp. ver. 6.—*Plummer*.

To meet our case Christ took upon him the form of a servant. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

15. **Bare witness . . . and cried**—Better, *bear witness and cries*. At the end of a long life this testimony of the Baptist abides still fresh in the heart of the aged apostle. Three times in twenty verses (15, 27, 30) he records the cry which was such an epoch in his own life.—*Plummer*. **He that cometh after me**—The exact meaning seems to be—"He who is coming after me" (in his ministry as in his birth) has become superior to me, for he was in existence from all eternity before me—*Cambridge Bible*. Christ did not begin his public ministry till the imprisonment of John the Baptist. Mark 1. 14. Thus as a public teacher he came after John the Baptist.—*Abbott*. The Baptist, last of the Old Testament prophets, and on the authority of Jesus himself (Matt. 11. 10, 11) greatest among them all, must be supposed to have understood the pre-existence of the expected Messiah not less clearly than Isaiah (6. 1 and 40. 3) and Daniel (7. 18) and Malachi (3. 1). Note also the prophetic view of his father Zacharias (Luke 1. 16, 17, 76), who manifestly saw that John was to be the harbinger of the Messiah foretold by Isaiah and Malachi.—*Coules*. **Is preferred before me**—"My successor is my predecessor."—*Hengstenberg*. The mere fact of Christ's pre-existence would be no reason for esteeming him more highly than Job—the devil existed before John the Baptist; nor was preferred before me in the sense of, was exalted in rank above me; but came forth, or, was set before me. The reference is to the previous manifestation of the Word, in the partial revelations of God in the Old Testament. All the disclosures of the divine nature in the Old Testament were made through the Word or utterance of God, through whom alone he speaks to the human race.—*Abbott*.

16. **And**—Because. The testimony of the Baptist to the incarnate Word is confirmed by the experience of all believers. The evangelist and not the Baptist speaks here. **Of his fullness**—Means literally, "out of his fullness," as from an inexhaustible store.—*Cambridge Bible*. **And grace for grace**—Of this expression there are two interpretations. The ancient expositors understood it to mean, "For the lesser grace of the Old Testament we have received the greater grace of the New Testament." The modern commentators, *Alford*, *Meyer*, *Lange*, etc., understood it to mean, "For each new accessory of grace we received a still larger gift. Each grace, though, when given, large enough, is, as it were, overwhelmed by the accumulation and fullness of that which follows."

How free the supply; we have all received. "None went empty away."—*Meyer*.

Authorized Version.

17 For the ¹⁶law was given by Mo'ses, ²⁰but grace and ²¹truth came by Je'sus Christ.

18 No ²²man hath seen God at any time; the ²³only begotten Son, which is in ²⁴the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Revised Version.

17 For the law was given ¹⁴by Mo'ses; grace and truth came ¹⁵by Je'sus

18 Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; ¹⁹the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

¹⁶ Exod. 20. 1. — ²⁰ Rom. 5. 21. — ²¹ Chap. 14. 6. — ²² Exod. 24. 10. — ²³ 1 John 4. 2. — ²⁴ Prov. 8. 30.

¹⁴ Or, through. — ¹⁵ Or, through. — ¹⁹ Many very ancient authorities read God only begotten.

The nature of Christian experience. It is not a mere trust in a crucified Saviour for pardon for the past; it is also a personal and continuous receiving of divine life from the fullness of a living Saviour.—*Abbott.*

Enough for all, enough for each, enough for evermore. Chrysostom compares Christ to a fire from which ten thousand lamps are kindled, but which burns as brightly thereafter as before. "The sea is diminished if you take a drop from it, though the diminution be imperceptible; but how much soever a man draws from the divine Fountain, it continues undiminished."

17. For—Because. Giving the ground of the statement that Christians received new and richer gifts of grace; the ground being that the law of Moses was a limited and narrow enactment, while Jesus Christ imparted the fullness of grace and truth which was in him. Ver. 14; comp. Rom. 4. 15; 10. 4; Gal. 3. 10.—*Vincent.* The mention of "grace" reminds the Evangelist that this was the characteristic of the Gospel, and marked its superiority to the law; for the law could only condemn transgressors, grace forgives them.—*Plummer.* The law was given by Moses.—The law is the expression of absolute justice, which in itself knows not grace nor mercy. This was given from God to men by Moses; but if there were nobody better than Moses we should have had nothing but law alone. There would have been no grace to bring salvation from its penalty, consequent truth to reveal the grace. These came, even into the Old Testament dispensation, by Jesus Christ. All the mixture of grace with law in the Old Testament is from Christ.—*Whedon.* **Came**—Note the change from "was given." The grace and truth which came through Christ were his own; the law given through Moses was not his own. **Jesus Christ**—St. John no longer speaks of the Word; the Word has become incarnate (ver. 14), and is spoken of henceforth by the names which he has borne in history.—*Plummer.*

18. No man hath seen God—Not merely no man; no one—man, angel, archangel. The phrase here "seen God" is equivalent to the phrase knowing God perfectly, in Matt. 11. 27. We know him but in part, shall see him only when we awake in his likeness (Psa. 17. 15); Christ sees him because he is one with him.—*Abbott.* **At any time**—Better, *ever yet*; "no one hath ever yet seen God;" but some shall see him hereafter.—*Plummer.* **The only begotten Son**—The question of reading here is very interesting. But the three oldest and best manuscripts, and two others of great value, have "only-begotten God." This very unusual expression is probably the true reading, and has been changed to the usual "only begotten Son," a change which in an old Greek manuscript would involve the alteration of only a single letter.—*Cambridge Bible.* **Hath declared**—Acted as his interpreter. Comp. chap. 6. 46; 14. 6, 9, 10; 1 Tim. 3. 16; Heb. 1. 3. Not merely by what he teaches concerning the divine nature, but yet more by his personal manifestation of the divine nature in his own life and character.—*Abbott.* **He hath told out**—*Wiclif.* "Who hath seen him that he might tell us?" Eccles. 43. 31. The answer to every such question, dimly thought or clearly asked, is that no man hath ever so known God as to be his interpreter; that the human conception of God as "terrible" and "great" and "marvelous" (Eccles. 43. 29) is not that of his essential character; that the true conception is that of the loving Father in whose bosom is the only Son, and that this Son is the only true Word uttering to man the will and character and being of God.—*Watkins.*

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

The works of Christ attest his divinity. Ver. 3. Francis Junius, whom at his death Scaligula said the whole world lamented as its instructor, was recovered from atheism by simply perusing John 1. 1-5. Persuaded by his father to read the New Testament, "At first sight," he says, "I fell unexpectedly on that august chapter. I was so struck with what I read that I

instantly perceived the divinity of the subject and the authority and majesty of the Scripture to surpass all human eloquence."—*Turnbull*.

Creation is but the relief of Christ's fullness. When trees blossom there is not a single breast-pin, but a whole bosom full of gems; and of leaves they have so many suits that they can throw them away to the winds all summer long. What unnumbered cathedrals has he reared in the forest shades, full of curious carvings and haunted by tremulous music, while the stars seem to have flown out of his hand faster than the sparks out of a mighty forge.—*Beecher*.

Light is not always welcomed. Ver. 5.—A colonial governor of the Bahamas who was about to return to England offered to procure from the home government any favor the natives desired. The reply was as startling as the request for the head of John the Baptist: "Tell them to *tear down the light-houses*; they are ruining the prosperity of the colony." The people were wroth.—*Church*.

When the Bastille was about to be destroyed a prisoner was brought out who had been long lying in one of its gloomy cells. Instead of joyfully welcoming the liberty which had been granted him he entreated that he might be taken back to his dungeon. It was so long since he had seen the light that he preferred the captivity and darkness of the prison to the light of the sun.—*Denton*.

Light is good, but sore eyes don't like it.—*Spurgeon*.

Christ should be the teacher's central theme. Vers. 6, 7, 8.—A Spanish artist was employed to depict the "Last Supper." It was his object to throw the sublimity of his art into the countenance of his Master; but he put on the table in the foreground some chased cups of exquisite workmanship, and when his friends viewed the picture on the easel every one said, "What beautiful cups!" "Ah," said he, "I have made a mistake; these cups *divert the eyes of the spectator from the Master*, on whom I wished to fix the entire attention of the observer," and he took his brush and rubbed them from the canvas.

When a lad was asked in Sabbath-school to repeat what he had learned in the week he said, "Sir, *we would see Jesus*." The teacher was conscience-smitten. He remembered he had given excellent lessons on the creation, the fall, the exodus, etc., but had said little about Christ. So instead of giving the lesson he had prepared he talked to the lads earnestly upon this request, and several were converted that afternoon.

Our natures must be changed by the Spirit of God. Ver. 13.—A man may work brass to great beauty, but no artificer can work it into gold. To change the nature is the work of omnipotence.—*Cecil*.

To hew a block of marble and carve it into a statue, to change a waste wilderness into a garden of flowers, to melt a lump of iron-stone and forge it into watch-springs, are but the same thing in a new shape, but we need the grafting in of that which we had not before.—*Ryle*.

A countryman brought his gun to the gunsmith for repairs. The latter said, "Your gun is in a ruinous condition; what do you want for it?" "Well," said the other, "I want a new stock, lock, and barrel." "Why," said the smith, "better have a new gun altogether." "Ah," was the reply, "that's just what I do want." This is just the repairing man's nature requires.—*Spurgeon*.

To meet our case Christ took upon him the form of a servant. Ver. 14.—A missionary went to the West Indies to preach to the slaves. He found their slavery so bitter, and their prejudices against white men so intense, that he could not gain a hearing. So he sold himself to their master, worked and suffered in the gang with them, and taught them as he toiled. By bowing to their condition and bearing their bondage he won their sympathy. It is only a faint epitome of what Christ did.—*Beecher*.

TEACHING HINTS.

From the scenes of war and blood in Old Testament history we pass over nearly seven centuries to St. John in Ephesus. Present a picture of the last of the apostles in old age, surrounded by the churches of Asia Minor, and awaiting the hour when once more he shall rest his head upon his Master's bosom.

Give a brief account of the Gospel according to St. John. Latest given of the gospels, and perhaps the "last word" of the whole Bible; written not for Jews, nor Greeks, nor Romans, but for *Christians*, the new man developed under the Gospel.

The theme of John's gospel is presented in this introduction. It is the God-man; Christ at once the fullness of God and the fullness of man.

I. The Word pre-existent. Vers. 1-9. In these opening verses we find the nature and traits of Christ before his coming to earth. With us life begins at birth, but here is a life that existed before it was born.

1. *A divine Being.* Ver. 1. "The Word was God." John makes the astounding claim that he who was born in Bethlehem and crucified on Calvary was the manifestation of God.

2. *An eternal Being.* Vers. 1, 2. It is not stated that "he was created" or "he began to be," but *he was in the beginning.*

3. *An almighty Being.* Ver. 3. By his power all things were made, as Paul tells us in his epistles. See Eph. 3. 9; Col. 1. 16; Heb. 1. 2.

4. *A personal Being.* Ver. 4. Some may suppose that "the Word" here referred to is a principle or a force in nature. But no, John is careful to tell us that this Word *had life*; that is, was and is a living personality.

5. *An enlightening Being.* Vers. 5, 9. This Being did not dwell alone, apart from his works. He entered into relation with men, enlightening every soul and bestowing blessings.

II. The Word incarnate. This is the theme of the lesson from verse 10 to verse 18. God was made flesh and came among men.

1. *He was in the world.* Ver. 10. Gracious fact! He who made the world did not leave it to work out its own destiny, but came, all unknown, into his world.

2. *He came to his own people.* Ver. 11. He chose out of all the nations of the world the one which was best adapted by racial traits for his purpose; he trained it through twenty centuries of discipline, and then he came through that people to the world. There was no other land save Palestine in which Christ could have come.

3. *He came in human flesh.* Ver. 14. He did not blaze upon men with his divine glory, nor did he come in the form of an angel. He came as a man, with our likeness, and in our nature.

4. *He came revealing his glory.* Ver. 14. While the brighter glory of Christ was veiled, yet he manifested his divinity in his works, in his words, and in his character.

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LESSON II.—July 12.

CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLES.—JOHN 1. 29-42.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!—John 1, 29.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—29 A. D.

PLACE.—BETHABARA beyond Jordan.

CONNECTING LINKS.—We pass now to the witness of John on the second day, when he sees Jesus coming unto him, probably on the return from the temptation. Forty days had passed since they had met before, and since John knew at the baptism that Jesus was the Messiah. These days were for the One a period of loneliness, temptation, and victory. They must have been for the other a time of quickened energy, wondering thought, and earnest study of what the prophets foretold the Messianic advent should be.—*Watkins*.

Authorized Version.

29 The next day John seeth Je'sus coming unto him, and saith, Behold ¹the Lamb of God, ²which ³taketh away the sin of the world!

30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31 And I knew him not: but that he

Revised Version.

29 On the morrow he seeth Je'sus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, which ¹taketh away

30 the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is become before me: for he was

31 ²before me. And I knew him not;

¹ Exod. 12. 8; Isa. 53. 7; 1 Pet. 1. 19; Rev. 5. 6.—² 1 Cor. 15. 8; Gal. 1. 4; Heb. 1. 3; 2. 17; 9. 26; 1 John 2. 3; Rev. 1. 6.—³ Or, beareth.

¹ Or, beareth the sin.—² Or, first in regard of me.

I. THE LAMB OF GOD. Verses 29-34.

29. The next day—There were three days of testimony of John to Jesus. Vers. 19, 29, 35. The last two were testimonies to the *present* Jesus.—*Whedon*. Behold the Lamb of God—He does not say, "Behold the world's great Teacher;" nor, "Behold him whose spotless example is to enlighten and regenerate the race;" nor even, "Behold your long-expected King, for the kingdom of heaven, as ye have often heard from me, is even now at hand." Any one of these points he might have put into the foreground of this first announcement; but, passing them all, he seizes upon another, by far more central, prominent, and comprehensive than either or all of these, and announces him as the sacrificial Lamb who takes upon himself and bears away the sin of the world.—*Cowles*. Which taketh away—"Taketh away," exactly represents the meaning of the original verb, which signifies, not bears, or suffers, or releases from the penalty of, but *takes away*. It corresponds almost exactly with the word ordinarily translated forgive. Observe that the verb is in the present tense, *is taking away*. The sacrifice has been offered once for all; but its effect is a continuous one. Christ is ever engaged in lifting up and taking away the sin of the world.—*Abbott*. The sin—As if it were one great burden.—*Plummer*.

We should bear personal testimony for Christ. See ILLUSTRATIONS. It was no more really John's duty than it is yours.

We should look to Jesus as our substitute. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The "sin of the world" is taken away by him. There remains neither guilt nor punishment for those who trust him.

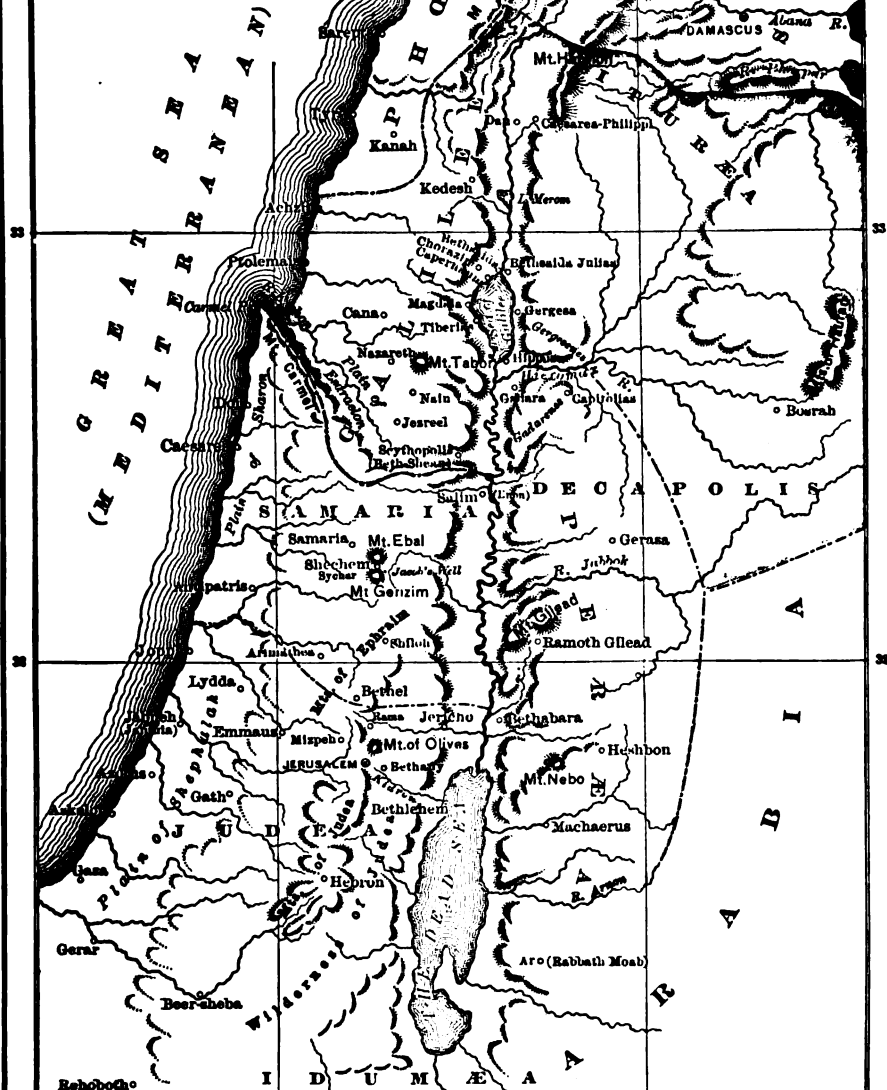
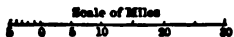
30. This is he—These words here, as in verses 15 and 27, introduce a quotation from an earlier and unrecorded statement of the Baptist, uttered in proverbial form, and to be understood in their fulfillment. Chap. 3. 30.—*Watkins*. Of whom I said, etc.—See ver. 15, Lesson I.

31. And I knew him not—Better, and I also knew him not; so again in verse 33. The

PALESTINE

in the time of
CHRIST

Hunt & Eaton, New York.



Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
should be made manifest to Is'ra-el, therefore am I come baptizing with water.	but that he should be made manifest to Is'ra-el, for this cause came I baptizing
32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode unto him.	32 tizing 'with water. And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him.
33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the 'same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.	33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize 'with water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth 'with the Holy Spirit.
34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.	34 And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.
* Acts 2. 4.	* Or, <i>in</i> .—* Or, <i>in</i> .—* Or, <i>in</i> .

reference is to "whom ye know not" of verse 26, and the assertion is not, therefore, inconsistent with the fact that John did know him on his approach to baptism. Matt. 3. 13. In the sense that they did not know him standing among them, he did not know him, though with the incidents of his birth and earlier years and even features he may have been familiar. It can hardly be that the son of Mary was unknown to the son of Elizabeth, though one had dwelt in Nazareth and the other "was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." Luke 1. 80; 2. 51. He knew not all; but as God's herald he knew that the coming King should be made manifest to Israel; and so he had made confident proclamation and begun the Messianic baptism. The Person would be his own witness. Heaven would give its own sign to those who could spiritually read it. The Baptizer with the Spirit would himself be so fully baptized with the Spirit that to the spiritual eye it would take visual form and be seen "as a dove descending from heaven."—*Ellicott*.

32. Bare record—Gave testimony. I saw—Better, *I have beheld*, or contemplated. 1 John 4. 12, 14.—*Handy Commentary*. The Spirit—Precisely what John's hearers understood him to mean by this phrase it is not easy to decide. They were without our theological definitions, but that some sort of divine manifestation was referred to they would not doubt. Like a dove—This may have been visible to Christ and the Baptist alone. A real appearance is the natural meaning here and in St. Luke (3. 22).—*Plummer*. This visible descent of the Spirit made no change in Christ's nature: (1) It made the Messiah known to the Baptist, and through him to the world; (2) it marked the official commencement of the ministry of the Messiah, like the anointing of a king. And it abode upon him—The Spirit of God, not the dove, abode.—*Abbott*.

Christianity is the dispensation of the Spirit. See ILLUSTRATIONS. And if Joel's wonderful prophecy is not fulfilled in us, it is because we are not living on the lofty Christian plane.

33. And I knew him not—Or, as before, *I also* knew him not. I, as well as you, knew him not, till this sign was vouchsafed me. Why, then, did he at first object to baptizing Jesus, if he did not recognize in him the Christ? Matt. 3. 14. He was second cousin of Jesus; knew him, probably, as a pure and holy man; perhaps knew the facts respecting Jesus's birth, which were certainly known to John's mother; may even have suspected that he was the promised Messiah; and at all events may have believed that he needed no baptism of repentance. He did not, however, know him to be the Messiah, and did not recognize him as such, till after the promised sign, and this followed the baptism of Jesus.—*Abbott*. The same said unto me—When this revelation was made we are not told.—*Plummer*.

34. And I saw, and bare record—Better, *And I have seen and have borne witness*. "I have seen" is in joyous contrast to "I knew him not," verses 31, 33. "Have borne witness" is the same verb as in verses 7, 8, and 32. Hence "witness" is preferable to "record" both here and in verse 32.—*Plummer*.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
85 Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples;	85 Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples;
86 And looking upon Je'sus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!	86 and he looked upon Je'sus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb
87 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Je'sus.	87 of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed
88 Then Je'sus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rab'bi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where 'dwestest thou?	88 Je'sus. And Je'sus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rab'bi (which is to say, being interpreted, 'Master), where
89 He saith unto them, Come and	89 abidest thou? He saith unto them,
<small>8 Or, abidest.</small>	<small>8 Or, teacher.</small>

II. THE FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB. Verses 35-40.

35. Again—Referring to verse 29; it should come second. The next day *again* John was standing. The difference between this narrative and that of the Synoptists (Matt. 4. 18; Mark 1. 16; Luke 5. 2) is satisfactorily explained by supposing this to refer to an earlier and less formal call of these first four disciples, John and Andrew, Peter and James.—*Cambridge Bible*. Two of his disciples—One of these we are told was Andrew (ver. 40); the other was no doubt John himself. The account is that of an eye-witness; and his habitual reserve with regard to himself fully accounts for his silence. If it was some one else it is difficult to see why St. John pointedly omits to mention his name. There was strong antecedent probability that the first followers of Christ would be disciples of the Baptist.—*Plummer*.

Souls around us are inwardly seeking God. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

36. Looking upon—*Having looked on* with a fixed, penetrating gaze.—*Cambridge Bible*. At this look all the old thoughts in their fullness come crowding back. Yes, it *is* he! Behold the Lamb of God!—*Ellicott*. As he walked—Or, as we should say, As he was taking a walk. One of the numerous indications in the gospels that Christ was a lover of nature, accustomed to meditate and study in communion with nature.—*Abbott*. This was probably the last meeting of the Baptist and Christ.

Observe how this verse teaches the value of personal work and personal influence. The first disciples are led to seek Christ, not by the public discourse, but by the private words of the Baptist; by private influence they bring Peter (41); by private invitation Philip is added to the disciples (43); and by personal solicitation Nathanael is brought to Christ (45).—*Abbott*.

37. Heard him speak—The declaration had not been addressed to them in particular. They followed Jesus—The beginning of the Christian Church.—*Plummer*.

38. Jesus turned, and saw them following—They follow wishing, and yet not daring, to question him. He sees this, and seeks to draw them forth by himself asking the first question.—*Watkins*. What seek ye—In a similar manner he opens conversation with the woman at the well (chap. 4. 10, 16), with the disciples fishing at the sea of Galilee (chap. 21. 5), and with the disciples on their way to Emmaus. Luke 24. 17. Christ as a conversationalist is a study for the Christian. Observe how he opens the way and leads on to familiar acquaintance, first by his question, then by his invitation, finally by his hospitality.—*Abbott*.

Often in the spiritual reticence, so common to the first experiences of the awakened soul, its real aspirations after truth are concealed beneath an assumed curiosity respecting some indifferent matter. Christ meets this non-pertinent, if not impertinent, curiosity with an invitation which attaches the two inquirers to him for life.—*Abbott*.

What seek ye? This is the word which the great Teacher address to us all, to call us to reflection and to seeking aright the right.—*Whedon*.

39. Come and see—They think of a visit later, it may be on the following day. He bids them come at once. Now is the day of salvation. It was the sacred turning-point of the writer's

Authorized Version.

see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother 'Si'mon, and saith unto him, We have found the Mes-si'as, which is, being interpreted, 'the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Je'sus. And when Je'sus beheld him, he said, Thou art Si'mon the son of Jo'na: thou shalt be called Ce'phas, which is, by interpretation, 'A stone.

Revised Version.

Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it

40 was about the tenth hour. One of the two that heard John *speak*, and followed him, was An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Si'mon, and saith unto him, We have found the Mes-si'ah (which is, being interpreted, 'Christ).

42 He brought him unto Je'sus. Je'sus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Si'mon the son of 'John: thou shalt be called Ce'phas (which is by interpretation, 'Pe'ter).

^c That was two hours before night. — ^d Matt. 4. 14. — ^e Or, the Anointed: Psal. 2. 2; Dan. 9. 25. — ^f Or, Peter; Matt. 16. 18.

^g That is, Anointed. — ^h Or, James: called in Matt. xvi. 17, *Jonah*. — ⁱ That is, *Rock* or *Stone*.

own life, he remembers the very time of day—the tenth hour. About four o'clock P. M.—*Ellicott*. Where he dwelt—It may have been a house, a tent, or, as is often the case in Palestine, a cave or grotto. There did Andrew and John spend the residue of the day in converse with Jesus; and there did they, these two disciples of the Baptist, come to that faith in Jesus by which, without if or qualification, they could say to Simon, "We have found the Messiah."—*Whedon*. The precision concerning the hour is one of those minute touches which would not be found in either a mythical tradition or an ecclesiastical forgery.—*Abbott*.

40. One of the two—The evangelist will even here draw the veil over his own identity; he never refers to himself by name. Chap. 13. 23; 18. 15; 19. 26; 20. 3; 21. 20. The minute accuracy of detail in this narrative, extending to the specification of the day and of the hour, justifies the belief that it is the narrative of an eye and ear witness.—*Abbott*. Simon Peter's brother—In church history Peter is every thing and Andrew nothing; but there would have been no apostle Peter but for Andrew.—*Plummer*.

Nothing can supply the place of individual effort. Vers. 40, 41. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

41. He first findeth—The meaning of "first" becomes almost certain when we remember John's characteristic reserve about himself. Both disciples hurry to tell their own brothers the good tidings, that the Messiah has been found. Andrew finds his brother first, and afterward John finds his, but we are left to infer the latter point. Andrew thrice brings others to Christ; Peter, the lad with the loaves (6. 8), and certain Greeks (12. 22); and excepting Mark 16. 3 we know scarcely any thing else about him. Thus it would seem as if in these three incidents John had given us the key to his character. And here we have another characteristic of this gospel—the lifelike way in which the less prominent figures are sketched. Besides Andrew we have Philip (1. 44; 6. 5; 12. 21; 14. 8); Thomas (11. 16; 14. 5; 20. 24-29); Nathanael (1. 45-51); Nicodemus (3. 1-12; 7. 50-52; 19. 39); Martha and Mary (11. 1-3).—*Cambridge Bible*. His own brother Simon—A circle of friends, it would seem, from Galilee, mostly from Bethsaida, are now at the Jordan, drawn by the ministry of the Baptist, and in more or less close connection with him. Of these Jesus will now form the nucleus of his apostolic college. But they are special disciples rather than apostles.—*Whedon*.

42. Beheld—Same word as in verse 36, implying a fixed, earnest look; what follows shows that Christ's gaze penetrated to his heart and read his character.—*Plummer*. Cephas—The word occurs only in this place in the gospels, elsewhere in the New Testament only in St. Paul. 1 Corinthians and Galatians. Remembering the general significance of Hebrew names, the changes in the Old Testament, as of Abram, Sarai, and Jacob, and among these first disciples, as of James and John (Mark 3. 16, 17), all these names of Peter seem meant to characterize the man: "Thou art not Hearer, the son of Jehovah's Grace; thou shalt be called and be a Rock-man." Comp. Matt. 16. 17.—*Ellicott*. There is no discrepancy between this and Matt. 16. 18. Here Christ gives the name Peter; there he reminds Peter of it.—*Plummer*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

We should bear personal testimony for Christ. Ver. 29. A wealthy lady of Canada, when converted, felt that she ought to recommend religion to others by speaking in the prayer-meeting. She feared she would break down, but said at length: "I can at least stand up and fail for Christ."

An infidel was one day walking in the woods and heard an old man, a reclaimed drunkard, in prayer. He knew his changed life and this impressed him still more. Soon after, in a testimony meeting, he heard him testify to Christ's power to save. In the same meeting a young lady, one of his singing-school scholars, related a touching experience. Completely broken down he came to the altar saying: "Here comes a Saul of Tarsus," was converted and became a useful minister.

We should look to Jesus as our substitute. Ver. 29.—It snowed so much I could not go to the place I determined. I went to a Methodist chapel in an obscure street. During the sermon the preacher, a thin looking layman, fixed his eyes on me and said: "Young man, you are in trouble; you will never get out of it till you obey this message." Then raising his hands he shouted as only a Methodist could: "Look! look! It's only look!" I did look, and in that instant lost my crushing load.—*Spurgeon*.

The man that travels with his face northward has it gray and cold. Let him turn to the south, where the sun dwells, and his face will glow. "Looking unto Jesus," is the sovereign cure for sinners.—*MacLaren*.

The pilot of a United States revenue cutter was asked if he knew all the rocks along the coast where he sailed. He replied: "No; it is only necessary to know where there are no rocks." Whatever the difficulties, he that looks aright to Jesus is safe.

Christianity is the dispensation of the Spirit. Vers. 32, 33.—As oftentimes when walking in a wood near sunset, though the sun himself be hidden by the bushiness of the trees around, yet we know that he is still above the horizon, from seeing his beams illuminating a thousand leaves before us; so, by powerful proofs, we know the Spirit works mightily among men. Lamps so heavenly must have been lit from on high.—*Hare*.

Truth may be compared to a cavern glittering with spar, having wondrous stalactites hanging from the roof. Into this unexplored region a guide, with lighted flambeau, offers to conduct you. He brings you into its depths, points here to the rise of a stream, there to a peculiar rock, and again into a natural hall, revealing to you at every step hidden wonders. The vast discoveries made in every domain of truth in modern times show that a divine Guide has been lighting up darkness and revealing the secrets of the Lord to those who fear him.—*W. A. D.*

The very best poetry of the world is Christian. Painting grew under the shadow of its wing. Music and architecture flourished chiefly on Christian soil. When did the revival of literature and science take place in Europe? Not till the revival of Christianity under Luther. When did Science discover that the sun is the center of our system? Not till Luther discovered that Christ is the center of religion. Stephenson, when asked what power pulled the train along the rails, answered: The sun. And if you ask what power is now working in the heart of civilization, I answer: The power of the Spirit of Christ.—*Jonas*.

Souls around us are inwardly seeking God. Vers. 35-38.—The soul of man is a clinging soul, seeking for support. As in a neglected garden you see creepers making shift to maintain themselves as best they can; one convolvulus twisting round another, and both dragging on the ground; a clematis leaning on the door which will soon open and let the whole mass fall down; so it is mournful to see human souls seeking a sufficient object to twine around.—*Hamilton*.

As birds when their time of migration comes, and they feel the impulse to fly, will not be stopped by the snap of the fowler's gun or by the sweep of the hawk, but rise and fly through night and day to find that sunnier land, so souls feel the call of God and move toward him.—*Beecher*.

Nothing can supply the place of individual effort. Vers. 40, 41.—Said General Havelock, in reply to a remark of a friend as to his influence over the men of his regiment, "I keep close to them—have personal contact with each man and know each man's name."

Harlan Page, coming early to a meeting, found a stranger sitting there, and politely spoke to him. The conversation went on until the man—who said that "Christians had always kept him at arm's length" before—was melted into penitence.—*Cuyler*.

Richard Baxter dealt individually with the parishioners of Kidderminster, bringing them to his house and *taking them apart one by one*. He tells us that, because of it, more than one third of the grown-up inhabitants were converted to God.

A man gave in his experience in one of Mr. Moody's meetings: "I have been for five years on the Mount of Transfiguration." "How many souls have you led to Christ last year?" was Mr. Moody's sharp question. "Well, I don't know," he replied. "Have you saved any?" "I don't know that I have." "Well, we don't want that kind of mountain-top experience. When a man gets so high that he cannot reach down and save poor sinners there is something wrong."

TEACHING HINTS.

In our lesson we look upon the source of that great river, the Christian Church. There was a day when four men constituted the entire Church of Christ on earth, and on the day before there were but two, the first disciples of Jesus.

Let us notice the various relations of men to Jesus which this lesson shows.

1. **Seeing Christ.** Vers. 29-34. It is something to see Jesus as John saw him. Other men saw in him the Galilean carpenter, a common man. John, with eyes enlightened from above, saw in Jesus: 1.) *The Lamb of God.* Ver. 29. 2.) *The giver of the Spirit.* Vers. 30-33. 3.) *The Son of God.* Ver. 34. We see Jesus in the pages of the New Testament; what do we see in him?

2. **Pointing to Christ.** Vers. 35, 36. John the Baptist was not content with merely seeing Jesus. He must make others also see him. He was the first preacher of Christ, as his utterance, "Behold the Lamb of God," is the summary of all gospel preaching.

3. **Seeking Christ.** Ver. 37. It is not wonderful that after such an introduction to Jesus the two disciples should turn from John and seek to know the Lamb of God. That preaching is successful which leads men to follow Christ. What did they find in him? Verse 41 gives the answer. They found the consolation and hope of Israel.

4. **Communing with Christ.** Vers. 38, 39. Notice that sixty years afterward the evangelist John remembered the very hour when he first saw his Lord. Is not this true to life? Who forgets the moment when he first came into fellowship with Christ. Notice, too, that these men, as the result of one day with Jesus, reposed in him a faith that never wavered. The strongest and clearest faith is that which comes from communion with Christ.

5. **Testifying of Christ.** Vers. 40, 41. Each of these two men promptly told to his nearest relative whom they had found. Andrew told Simon, and John told James. Verse 41 gives their testimony, strong, direct, and clear. Let every one who has found Jesus give such a testimony to him, the testimony of his own experience.

6. **Leading to Christ.** Ver. 42. Each sought his own brother; Andrew's brother was the first to come, but James came soon after. And that is the way in which Christ's Church has grown from that time to the present.

Who would ever have heard of these men—John, Andrew, James, Peter—if they had not met Christ? They drew near to him, were transformed by him, breathed his spirit, and became great. So is every character transformed which comes under the influence of Jesus.

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LESSON III.—July 19.

CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE.—JOHN 2. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.—John 2. 11.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—28 A. D. "The third day" from the calling of Philip (1. 43), the last date given, making a week in all; the first week, perhaps, in contrast to the last week (12. 1).

PLACE.—Cana of Galilee, to distinguish it from Cana of Asaher. Josh. 19. 28. This Cana is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was the home of Nathanael (21. 2), and is now generally identified with Kanet-el-Jelil, about six miles north of Nazareth.

Authorized Version.

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Ca'na of Gal'ilee; and the mother of Je'sus was there:

2 And both Je'sus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Je'sus saith unto him, They have no wine.

Revised Version.

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Ca'na of Gal'ilee; and the

2 mother of Je'sus was there: and Je'sus also was bidden, and his dis-

3 ciples, to the marriage. And when the wine failed, the mother of Je'sus saith unto him, They have no wine.

I. THE MARRIAGE. Verses 1, 2.

1. The third day.—According to Jewish custom the weddings of virgins took place on the fourth day of the week, our Wednesday, and of widows on the fifth day, our Thursday.—*Light-foot.* Cana of Galilee—See introductory note on PLACE. The mother of Jesus was there.—The fact that Joseph is not mentioned in either of the gospels after Christ's manhood has led to the general opinion that he was dead. The presence of Mary and her apparent authority (ver. 5) indicate that the bride or bridegroom were connections or relatives.

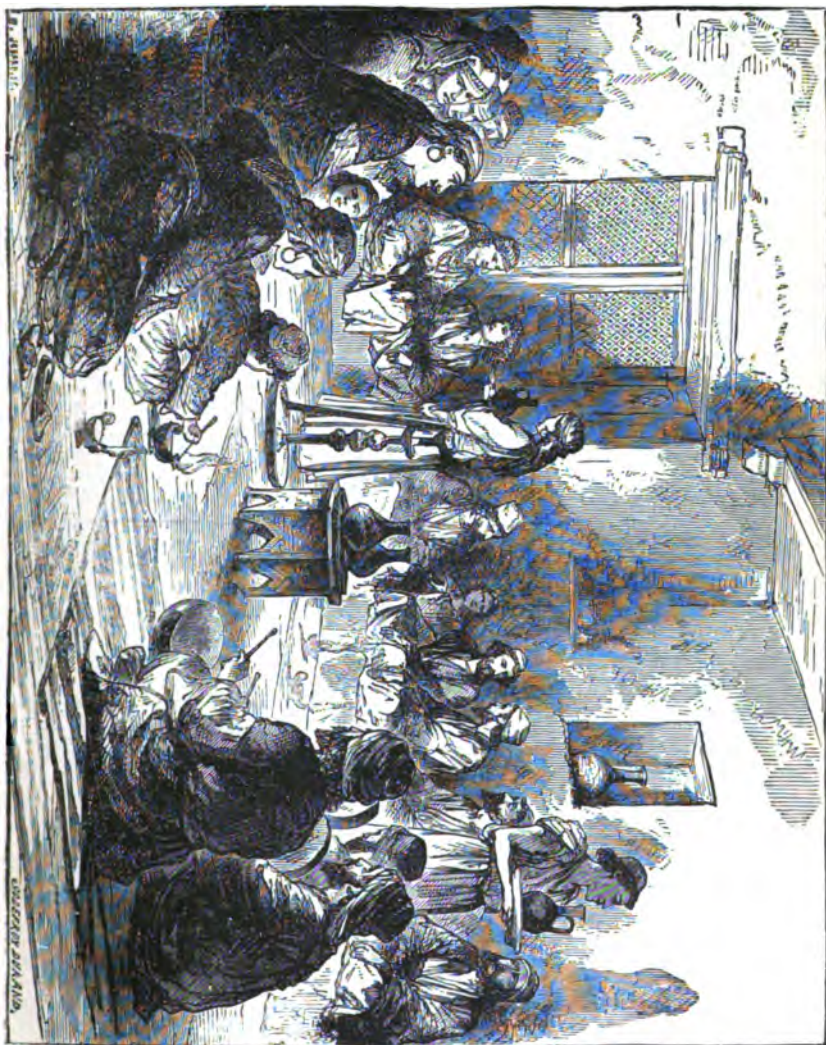
2. Jesus was called.—The student will observe that it is said of Mary that she *was there*, of Jesus that he *was called*, an indication that he came at a later period, and probably after the marriage feast, which usually lasted for several days, had begun.—*Abbott.* And his disciples.—Andrew, John, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and probably James.—*Plummer.* Family relationship may have secured the invitation of Jesus.—*Cowles.* It is quite in accord with Eastern hospitality that the disciples, who are now spoken of under this collective title, and formed with their rabbi a band of seven, should be bidden with him.—*Ellicott.* This unexpected increase of the number of guests may account for the failure of the wine-supply.—*Cowles.*

Sociability is commendable, and there is a time to laugh. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The ascetic notion of life is wholly unchristian. The love of merriment and the sense of the ludicrous are as truly natural, and therefore as much in accordance with God's will, as is sorrow. Sanctified sociability is needed in all our churches and homes. The sheep of Jesus should flock together.

II. THE MOTHER. Verses 3-5.

3. When they wanted wine—Better, *when the wine failed.* To Eastern hospitality such a mishap would seem a disgraceful calamity.—*Plummer.* For a brief statement of the conclusions of modern scholarship concerning the nature of the wine used at this feast, see article on THE WINE OF CANA at the close of this lesson. The mother of Jesus saith—If she were in any way responsible for the success of the feast and the supply was falling short, the appeal for help to her Son was natural; and it was specially so, if, as modern customs in the Orient indicate (*Ellicott*), the guests often contribute to the supplies at such entertainments.—*Abbott.* If Jesus had brought the surplus of company, his mother may have thought that he should supply the deficit of wine.—*Whedon.*

"THERE WAS A MARRIAGE IN CANA OF GALILEE."



Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
4 Je'sus saith unto her, 'Woman, what ¹ have I to do with thee? mine ² hour is not yet come.	4 And Je'sus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine
5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.	5 hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever
6 And there were set there six water-	6 he saith unto you, do it. Now there

* Chap. 19. 28.—3: Sam. 16. 30; 19. 22.—Ecc. 3. 1; chap. 7. 6.

4. Woman—John alone of all the evangelists never gives the Virgin's name.—*Plummer*. The fact that our Lord on the cross (19. 26) addressed his mother by the same term, *woman*, at the most tender moment of his earthly life, shows that the word is as respectful as our modern term "lady," and scarcely less affectionate than the term "mother." See Matt. 15. 28; Luke 13. 12; John 4. 21; 20. 13.—*Whedon*. Were proof needed of the tenderness which underlies this word as used by him, it would be found in the other instances which the gospels supply. It is spoken only to the Syro-Phœnician whose faith is great (Matt. 15. 28); to the daughter of Abraham loosed from her infirmity (Luke 13. 12); and, in this gospel, to the Samaritan embracing the higher faith (chap. 4. 21); perhaps to the sinner whom he does not condemn (chap. 8. 10); to the same mother from the cross (chap. 19. 26); and to Mary Magdalene in tears. Chap. 20. 13, 15.—*Watkins*. **What have I to do with thee**—Literally, "*What is there to me and to thee?*" Beyond all doubt the two regarded his life-work from stand-points so different that there is nothing in common between them. The parallels for the form of the question are Josh. 22. 24; Judg. 11. 12; 2 Sam. 16. 10; 1 Kings 17. 18; 2 Kings 3. 13; and the thrice-recorded question of the demoniac, Matt. 8. 29; Mark 1. 24; Luke 8. 28. The real parallel is John 7. 6.—*Ellicott*. If Christ here rebukes his mother, it cannot be maintained that she is immaculate. But the question *does* imply rebuke, as is evident from the other passages where the phrase occurs. What was she rebuked *for*? *Chrysostom* thinks for vanity; she wished to glorify herself through her son. More probably for interference. He will help, but in his own way and in his own time. Comp. Luke 21. 31.—*Plummer*. **Mine hour is not yet come**—By his "hour," or time, we understand some divinely appointed crisis or some transition-point in his history, opening some new stage or initiating some new event. He did not go to be baptized by John until his "hour" arrived. He was led of the Spirit (Matt. 4. 1) at the proper point or "hour" to his temptation. He uttered no self-testimony until the Baptist had attested him. Thus his every instant was obediently regulated by the divine order. His every movement, being connected with the clock-work of God's oversight, was timed by the pointing of the minute or second hand to its dot. The witness of the Father's Spirit with his own spirit announces to him the instant when his "hour" is come. In the present case his "hour" is the point of time when his era of miracles should commence. Jesus had now a request for miracle from his human mother, but no signal from his divine Father. Similarly (7. 30) his "hour" was not yet come to surrender to his murderers; until (17. 1) he ejaculates, "Father, the hour is come," namely, of his glorification through death. Also (7. 8), "My time is not yet fully come," namely, of going up to the feast of tabernacles. Comp. John 7. 30; 12. 23, 27; 13. 1; 16. 31. But how happens it that his "hour" did come so soon? for probably upon the same day it was that the miracle was performed. We reply that his "hour" probably *came immediately upon uttering this last sentence*. As soon as all fleshly claim to hold control over, or gain emolument by, his Messianic power was rejected—as soon as his mother retired to her proper position—then was the last obstacle removed, his area of action immediately opened, and the hour to manifest by miracle his glory had arrived.—*Whedon*.

5. His mother saith—Between the lines of his refusal her faith reads a better answer to her appeal.—*Cambridge Bible*. Do it—She speaks as having authority here; and she speaks to subordinate that authority to him.—*Whedon*.

We are to obey God even when we do not understand his design. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. THE MIRACLE. Verses 6-11.

6. Six waterpots of stone—As an eye-witness John remembers their number, material, and size. The surroundings of the first miracle would not easily be forgotten. It is idle to seek for any special meaning in the number six. Vessels of stone were preferred as being less liable to

Authorized Version.

pots of stone, 'after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Je'sus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the 'water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

Revised Version.

were six water-pots of stone set there after the Jews' manner of purifying, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Je'sus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they

8 filled them up to the brim. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the 'ruler of the feast. And 9 they bare it. And when the ruler of the feast tasted the water 'now become wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants which had drawn the water knew), the ruler of

10 the feast calleth the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man setteth on first the good wine; and when *men* have drunk freely, *then* that which is worse: thou hast kept the good wine

* Mark 7. 2.—* Chap. 4. 44.

* Or, *steward*.—* Or, *that it had become*.

impurity.—*Cambridge Bible*. They resembled, but were larger than, the vessels used for carrying water, as in chapter 4. 28. These were placed in the outer court, away from the guest-chamber, and the governor of the feast is ignorant of the circumstances. Ver. 9.—*Watkins*. After the manner of the purifying of the Jews—Personal cleanliness was one of the virtues of the Jews—made yet more sacred by their religion. Hence this large provision in the household for supplies of water.—*Coules*. The reference to the manner of the Jews is added for the Gentile readers, for whom John especially wrote.—*Abbott*. Two or three firkins—"Firkin" is an almost exact equivalent of the Greek *metretres*, which was about nine gallons. The six pitchers, therefore, holding from eighteen to twenty-seven gallons each, would together hold one hundred and six to one hundred and sixty-two gallons.—*Plummer*.

God delights to give liberally. See ILLUSTRATIONS. A truth which should comfort us as recipients and inspire us as givers.

8. Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast—A vessel was let down into the pitcher, and was then carried to the ruler of the feast, who would distribute the wine to the guests. *Ruler* rather than "governor." The same English word should be used throughout the two verses. What exact office is denoted by the Greek word is uncertain, as it occurs nowhere else in the Bible, and is very rare in the classical authors. The chief English commentators (*Alford*, *Wordsworth*, *Trenth*) are agreed that he was chosen by the guests from among their own number, but this opinion has not commanded the general assent of scholars; and there seems more reason to think that the person intended is what we would call the "head-waiter," whose duty it was to taste the viands and wines, to arrange the tables and couches, and to be generally responsible for the feast.—*Watkins*.

9. The water that was made wine—Or, *the water now becomes wine*. The Greek seems to imply that all the water had become wine; there is nothing to mark a distinction between what was now wine and what still remained water. It is idle to ask at which precise moment the water became wine.—*Cambridge Bible*. Which drew—Who had drawn. Called the bridegroom—Called out to him, probably across the table. The language which follows is sportive, and characteristic of such an occasion of festivity.—*Abbott*.

10. Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse—The verb rendered in our English version "have well drunk" is, literally, *are drunken*. Our translators have timidly shrunk from giving the full coarseness of the man's joke. In Matt. 24. 49; Acts 2. 15; 1 Cor. 11. 21; 1 Thess. 5. 7; Rev.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
11 This beginning of miracles did Je'sus in 'Ca'na of Gal'i-lee, 'and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.	11 until now. This beginning of his signs did Je'sus in Ca'na of Gal'i-lee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

⁶ Josh. 19. 28.—⁷ Chap. 1. 14.

17. 2, 6, we have the same words rightly translated. *Tyndall* and *Cranmer* were more accurate; they have "*be dronke*."—*Cambridge Bible*.

The difference between the feasts of the world and the feasts of Christ. The world gives its best wine at first, and when men have become intoxicated with it, then the poor, as the prodigal son experienced. Luke 15, 13-16. Christ ever reserves the good wine to the last.—*Abbott*.

11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; or, more exactly, *This did Jesus in Cana of Galilee as the beginning of his signs*. The form of the sentence makes it certain that it is the absolutely first, and not the first in Cana, which is meant.—*Ellicott*. This verse is conclusive against the miracles of Christ's childhood recorded in the Apocryphal Gospels. His glory—This is the final cause of Christ's "signs," his own and his Father's glory (11. 4.), and these two are one. Four hundred years had elapsed since the Jews had seen a miracle.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Christianity rests upon a miraculous basis. SEE ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE WINE OF CANA.

Scholars are divided as to the precise meaning of the various words in the Old and New Testaments translated wine. Dr. Whedon is one of the strongest advocates of that interpretation which would trace two kinds of wine—the fermented and the unfermented—throughout the record. Concerning this miracle he writes:

"There are two sorts, or rather states, of wine; the *one*, the unfermented grape juice, which is simply exhilarating; the other, the fermented, which is intoxicating. Fermentation is a phenomenon of decomposition, analogous to putrefaction in a dead animal. The grape juice is alive in the grape; consisting of sugar and albumen, held into juice form by the life power. When pressed out of the grape, the dying grape decomposes; the albumen uniting with the oxygen of the air becomes yeast, and the sugar becomes alcohol, which is the intoxicating substance. The grape juice, must, or new wine, in its live, natural, undecomposed state, is a cheering and nutritious food. By boiling it is cooked, and so protected from decomposition, and retained in its condition as food."

It is only fair to state that the majority of commentators do not concur with this view in every particular. It is a question of scholarship, and on its settlement depends no phase of the temperance question.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Sociability is desirable and commendable. Vers. 1, 2.—Christ asked his disciples to watch with him in Gethsemane. Two infants will walk hand in hand in the dark when neither would go alone. Invalids who count the strokes of midnight's wakeful hours cry out, "Father! Mother! Some one!" We sit by them, dozing, perhaps, saying and doing nothing, but *being* near. Through the streets of Paris between prison and block the most desperate were often observed sitting upon the cart's edge hand in hand. Triumph wants friends also.—*Hayne*.

Every limb of the body holds fellowship with every other, and as long as life lasts that fellowship is inevitable. If the hand be unwashed the eye cannot refuse communion with it on that account; if the fingers be diseased the hand cannot, by binding a cord around it, prevent the life current from flowing. Nothing but death can break up the fellowship. So when there is life of any kind fellowship is an inevitable consequence.—*Spurgeon*.

The man that has lived for himself has the privilege of being his own mourner.

True religion does not dispute that there is "a time to laugh." Vers. 1, 2.—This world would be a great groaning machine if God had not sent humor to make its wheels run

smooth, and sparkling wit by which to light a torch that should guide a thousand heavy feet in right ways.

Some people think black is the color of heaven, and that the more they can make their faces look like midnight the more evidence they have of grace. But God, who made the sun and the flowers, never sent me to proclaim such a lie as that. We are told to "rejoice in the Lord always." What then! "And again I say rejoice." Thus in a message in which there was time but for two things, both of them were joy.—*Beecher*.

Religion never was designed to make our pleasures less.

We are to obey God, even when we do not understand his design. Ver. 5.—Faith sends out no spies.—*Moody*. True obedience neither procrastinates nor questions.

A clergyman visiting the great pyramid in Egypt, in 1880, ascended the great gallery. The descent was along a narrow and slippery shelf, the only light being a bit of candle held by an Arab guide. As they came to a sharp corner where the path beyond was lower, narrower, more slippery and over a deep chasm the candle went out. The guide directed the minister to get on his shoulders that he might be carried thus over the chasm. The minister said, "Let me rest one hand on you and the other on the rock." "No, you must rest *both* on me," was the answer. "I will try *myself* and you shall help me." "No, you lean all weight on Arab," he continued. "But wait till I see what you are standing on." "No, you are quite safe resting on Arab." Seeing there was no alternative he yielded and was carried safely over. Implicit trust in God is never a risk.—*Bowen*.

A teacher instructing his class on "Thy will be done," etc., in the Lord's Prayer, asked, "How are the angels to be our pattern?" The first said, "They do God's will immediately;" the second, "They do it diligently;" the third, "They do it always;" the fourth, "They do it with all their hearts;" the fifth, "They do it all together." Then came a pause, but soon a little girl arose and said, "Why, they do it *without asking any questions*."

Aboubeker, the successor of Mohammed, wrote to Amrou ordering him to levy a number of warriors and go to Damascus to swell the torrent of Islamism. The order pained the disciple, but he did not hesitate. "I am," said he, "one of the arrows of Islam. God has placed the bow in thy hands; it is for thee to launch the arrow what direction thou mayest choose."—*Lamartine*.

God delights to give liberally. Ver. 7.—Alexander the Great said to one overwhelmed with his generosity, "I give as a king." Jehovah gives as the infinite God.

So many are God's kindnesses to us that as drops of water they run together; and it is not until we are borne up by the multitude of them as by streams in deep channels that we recognize them as coming from him. We have walked amid his mercies as in a forest where we are tangled among ten thousand growths, and touched on every hand by leaves and buds which we notice not. He gives every thing but punishment in overmeasure. The laziest bank in the world, away from towns, where no artists do congregate, where no flowers spring, nor grass invites the browsing herd, is patched and spotted with moss of such exquisite beauty that the painter who would produce one such thing would be immortal in fame. God's least thought is more prolific than man's greatest abundance.—*Beecher*.

Christianity rests upon a miraculous basis. Ver. 11.—All beginnings are wonderful. The powers at work for the upholding of the natural world would have been insufficient for its creation. Forces presided at its birth which then fell back and gave place to ordinary development. It is so in personal religion. By a mighty thunderstroke of grace the polarity in the man is shifted; the flesh that was the positive pole has become the negative, and the spirit is henceforth the positive.—*Trench*.

As bells toll to summon people to church, so miracles were designed to call attention to the voice of God speaking on a solemn occasion, as at the opening of a new dispensation.

TEACHING HINTS.

There is a name which Jesus bestowed upon himself, "the Son of man." It points to him as the universal, typical man; the crown of humanity; our model and example. We may look to him and see in him what we may be, what we should be. He is the ideal man.

The question often comes to the Christian, "What should be my attitude toward enjoyments

and pleasures? Should I live apart, without fellowship with others, or should I mingle freely in the pleasures of society?"

We may look to the Son of man at the wedding-feast for our example in the social relations of life. There we find in him:

1. **Sociality.** The Son of man came eating and drinking. He sat at the wedding-feast and the social table, though there were doubtless in the company some who were pleasure-loving, frivolous, and thoughtless of God. He sanctified the home, the institution of marriage, and the family relation by his presence. The man of God is no recluse, no cynic, no hermit. He is a man among men, a genial, social man, whose presence casts no gloom over the company.

2. **Self-command.** Jesus knew what his powers were, yet he restrained them until just the right moment. He kept himself fully under the divine will, and fully in fellowship with God. Therefore he knew how long to wait and when to act. Often men err in eagerness to use their gifts. Notice that Jesus, with the consciousness of mighty powers, waited thirty years. "Mine hour is not yet come" is a significant utterance.

3. **Helpfulness.** He held his powers for the good of men, and was ready to use them to meet men's needs and to make men happy. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," was his motto. Let it be ours also.

4. **Trust.** Notice the absolute confidence of Jesus that the miracle would be wrought. This was his *first* miracle; yet there was no tremor, no hesitation, no fear of the result. He leaned fully on God. So let his follower trust, and his faith will move mountains. There are miracles to be wrought now, not on jars of water nor on human bodies, but greater works on human souls.

5. **Instruction.** Every miracle had for its inner purpose the revelation of some great truth concerning the kingdom of God, and in this sense was an acted parable, an object lesson. This miracle, as the first of all, was rich in its teachings. It showed the contrast of the old and new dispensations, one water, the other wine. It showed the contrast of the feast of the world and the feast of the Gospel—one limited, narrow, transient in enjoyment, growing less in its pleasures as one drinks more deeply; the other, more abundant, richer, and deeper, as the more fully experienced. Jesus sat at the feast to show these spiritual teachings, and to open the eyes of men to them.

This event shows Jesus in some aspects where we cannot follow him: his divine power over nature and his divine authority over men. But in the traits above described we may be like him and may make his spirit our own.

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LESSON IV.—July 26.

CHRIST AND NICODEMUS. JOHN 3. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John 3. 16.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—28 B. C., immediately after the events described in chapter 2, and before Christ had inaugurated his missionary labors, which he did not begin till the imprisonment of John the Baptist.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

PERSONS.—Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin. He is twice brought to light in John's subsequent history, namely, in 7. 50 and in 19. 39; in the former case protesting against the action of the council in condemning Jesus without a hearing; in the latter bringing in his tribute of respect for the crucified One—"a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes" with which to embalm the body.—*Cowles.* The name was not uncommon among the Jews, but, like Stephen, Philip, Jason, etc., was derived from the Greeks. Of this particular Nicodemus we know with certainty nothing more than is told us in this gospel. The Talmud mentions a Nakedimon, the son of Gorion, whose real name was Bonai. It also gives the name Bonni as one of the disciples of Jesus. He was one of the three richest Jews when Titus besieged Jerusalem, but his family was afterward reduced to the most abject poverty. The inference is that this change of fortune is connected with his becoming a Christian and with the persecution which followed, and he is himself identified with the Nicodemus of the gospel. We can only say this may be so.—*Ellicott.*

Authorized Version.

1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him,

Revised Version.

1 Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of

2 the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be 3 with him. Jesus answered, and said

¹ Chap. 9. 16, 23; Acts 9. 22.—² Acts 10. 25.

I. THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH. Verses 1-7.

1. A ruler of the Jews—He was one of the Sanhedrin, which consisted of priests, Levites, elderly men, and rabbis.—*Whedon.*

2. Came to Jesus by night—This impressed itself upon the writer's mind, and became part of the description of Nicodemus in chapter 19. 39, and in some manuscripts in chapter 7. 50.—*Watkins.* Why by night? The reason generally assumed is fear of the Jews; but at this time there had not been developed any pronounced hostility on the part of the Judeans to Jesus. Nicodemus may have had a natural reluctance to commit himself to an unknown rabbi till he had learned more of his doctrine; he may have simply sought a quiet personal conversation, such as he could not obtain in the busy day-time.—*Abbott.* Rabbi—A term of respectful courtesy. We—Others are disposed to believe as well as Nicodemus.—*Plummer.*

The day of small things is not to be despised. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

3. Jesus answered—Jesus entered warmly into the gospel work to enlighten and save

Authorized Version.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, 'Except a man be born ^{again}, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nic'o-de'mus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5 Je'sus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, 'Except a man be born of water and ^{of} the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Revised Version.

unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born ^{anew}, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nic'o-de'mus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his

5 mother's womb, and be born? Je'sus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into

⁹ Chap. 1. 13; 2 Cor. 5. 17; Gal. 4. 15; Eph. 2. 5, 10; Tit. 2. 5; Jas. 1. 18; 1 Pet. 1. 23; 1 John 2. 9.—¹⁰ Or, from above.

⁴ Mark 16. 16; Acts 2. 38; Tit. 2. 5; 1 Pet. 2. 21.

¹ Or, from above.

even one soul; and even when he had but one hearer he availed himself of his opportunity to give his instructions the more definite, and so more effective, adaptation.—*Cowles*. He answers his thoughts before they are expressed. We have instances of this supernatural knowledge in the cases of Peter (1. 42), Nathanael (1. 47, 48), Nicodemus (3. 3), the woman at the well (4. 29), the disciples (6. 61, 64), Lazarus (11. 4, 15), Judas, (18. 11), Peter (21. 17).—*Plummer*. **Except a man be born again**—Our translators have followed the ancient expositors in giving the alternative renderings "born again" and "born from above" (Margin). *Chrysostom* notes the two currents of interpretation in his day; in our own day the opinions of scholars, whether we count them or weigh them, may be equally claimed for either view. In any case it meant "born afresh," or "anew."—*Watkins*. If to some readers Jesus should seem to open the subject of the new birth abruptly, let it be considered—(a) That Nicodemus apparently had a certain faith in Jesus, yet a faith which precisely lacked what the new birth would supply. He believed in the power of Jesus to work miracles; accepted these miracles as indorsing his mission from God as a great teacher, yet came short of accepting Jesus with a loving, trusting heart as his own personal Saviour from sin; (b) these first words of Jesus will no longer seem abrupt and wanting in easy connection with pre-existing ideas if we bear in mind that Nicodemus, as a well-educated Jew, had definite notions respecting "the kingdom of God"—definite, though not in all respects correct, and in some great points fundamentally defective.—*Cowles*. **He cannot see**—That is, so as to partake of it.—*Plummer*. **The kingdom of God**—Nicodemus had never thought of questioning his citizenship in this kingdom *by right of birth*. Was he not born a Jew? Was not his pedigree sanctioned and honored in the genealogies of his nation? The stock of Abraham gave him his credentials of membership in the kingdom of God. This, then, is his first fatal mistake. To make him a son and an heir in this kingdom more is needed than the birth he thinks of. He must have a higher birth than that. So Jesus begins from this starting-point.—*Cowles*.

5. **Born of water and of the Spirit**—Governing ourselves by the cardinal canon that we are to understand Christ as Christ expected his auditor to understand him, it cannot be difficult to understand this declaration. The Jewish proselyte, as a sign that he put off his old faiths, was baptized on entering the Jewish church. John the Baptist, employing the same symbolic rite, baptized Jew as well as Gentile, as a sign of purification by repentance from past sins. The Sanhedrin were familiar with his baptism, and had sent a delegation to inquire into it (chap. 1. 19, 25), and he had told them prophetically of the baptism of the Spirit which Christ would inaugurate. Nicodemus then would certainly have understood by Christ's expression, "born of water," a reference to this rite of baptism, and by the expression, "born of the Spirit," a reference to a new spiritual life, which, however, he could have only imperfectly apprehended. The declaration then is that no man can enter the kingdom of God except by (1) a *public* acknowledgement and confession of sin, a *public* putting off of the old man and entering into the new; and (2) a real and vital change of life and character wrought by the Spirit of God in the heart of the believer. By one act he enters into the visible and external kingdom. That a *public* confession and consecration is essential is clearly indicated elsewhere in Christ's teaching. Matt. 10. 32, 33. Observe the difference in phraseology here and in verse 8. He cannot *see* the kingdom of God except his eyes

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.	6 the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born ^a again.	7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born ^a anew. ³ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.
8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.	8 the Spirit. Nic'o-de'mus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?
9 Nic'o-de'mus answered and said unto him, ^a How can these things be?	10 things be? Je'sus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Is'ra-el, and understandest not these things?
10 Je'sus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Is'ra-el, and knowest not these things?	11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.
11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.	

^a Or, from above.—³ Eccl. 11. 5; 1 Cor. 2. 11.—⁴ Chap. 6. 52.

³ Or, from above.—³ Or, The Spirit breatheth.

are opened by a public and complete abandonment of the old and a spiritual consecration to the new. 2 Cor. 5. 14-16.—*Abbott*.

We can only enter the kingdom of God by a spiritual birth. *Vers. 3, 5, 6. See ILLUSTRATIONS.*

7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again—The original, by its construction, puts an emphasis on the word *ye*. And it was this which surprised Nicodemus: not that men must be born again, but that this necessity was laid on him, a child of Abraham, and an honored ruler and teacher among the Jews. Observe too that he says *ye*, not *we*.—*Abbott*.

II. THE MYSTERY OF THE NEW BIRTH. Verses 8-12.

8. The wind bloweth, etc.—This verse is sometimes taken very differently: *The Spirit breatheth where he willeth, and thou hearest his voice, but canst not tell whence he cometh and whither he goeth; so is every one born who is born of the Spirit.* The Aramaic word probably used by our Lord has both meanings, "wind" and "spirit," so that it is not impossible that both meanings are meant to run concurrently through the passage.—It was late at night when our Lord had this interview with the Jewish teacher. At the pauses in the conversation, we may conjecture, they heard the wind without, as it moaned along the narrow streets of Jerusalem; and our Lord, as was his wont, took his creature into his service—the service of spiritual truth.—*Liddon*. So is every one—Such is the case of every one; he feels the spiritual influence, but finds it incomprehensible in its origin, which is from above, and in its end, eternal life.—*Plummer*.

9. Nicodemus answered.—He is sobered by the moral power and earnestness of the Lord, lays aside caviling, and asks seriously for clearer light. For similar effect of Christ's personal power on a skeptical nature compare chap. 4. 11 with 25, and chap. 18. 33-38 with 19. 9-12.—*Abbott*. How can these things be—The answer to the previous question has spoken of a spiritual birth and a spiritual life and a spiritual kingdom, but all this is in a region of which the rabbinic schools knew nothing. They knew the precise number of words in the Pentateuch, the shape of each of the letters, the form of a phylactery, the width of a fringe, the titling of garden herbs, and the manner of washing the hands; but spirit, life, a man's soul born again!—*Ellicott*. Sad to say, Nicodemus is still annoyed where he was before: "*How can these things be!*"—*Coulter*.

10. Art thou a master of Israel?—Better, *Art thou the teacher of Israel?* The article points to the position of Nicodemus as a teacher of repute—"the well-known teacher." There is something of indignation here, as every-where when the words of Jesus Christ are addressed to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.—*Watkins*.

11. We . . . we . . . we—Jesus, in the next verse, speaks of himself in the singular.

Authorized Version.

13 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And 'no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, ~~even~~ the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And * as Mo'ses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For * God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that

Revised Version.

13 ness. If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, *even* the Son of man, 'which

14 is in heaven. And as Mo'ses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up :

15 that whosoever 'believeth may in in him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that

* Prov. 30. 4; chap. 4. 23; 14. 29; Acts 2. 24; 1 Cor. 15. 47; Eph. 4. 9.—* Num. 21. 9.—* Rom. 8. 3; 1 John 4. 9.

* Many ancient authorities omit which is in heaven.—* Or, *descend* in him that way.

Who then is this *we*? Himself and the prophets.—*Tholuck*. Himself and John the Baptist.—*Knapp*. All teachers like himself.—*Meyer* and *Ellicott*. All born of the Spirit.—*Lange* and *Wesley*. A proverbial saying.—*Alford*. The three persons of the Trinity.—*Stier* and *Whedon*. The plural may be merely rhetorical.—*Plummer*.

12. I.—Christ passes immediately back to the singular. **Earthly things**—Things which take place on earth, even though originating in heaven; for example, the "new birth" which, though "from above," must take place in this world. **Heavenly things**, in the same way, are things which have the sphere of their action in heaven, the full development of their spiritual life, of which the birth only is on earth; the divine counsels of redemption; the Messianic mysteries, of which this ruler of Israel does not understand even the initiation.—*Plummer*.

Spiritual truths need spiritual discernment. Vers. 11, 12. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. THE SOURCE OF THE NEW BIRTH. Verses 13-17.

13. **No man hath ascended up to heaven**—No man has been in heaven so as to see and know these heavenly things excepting Christ. **Came down from heaven**—Literally, *out of* heaven; at the incarnation.—*Plummer*. **Which is in heaven**—These words are omitted from some of the best manuscripts. But their apparent difficulty vanishes before the true idea of heaven. The Son of man, who came down from heaven, was ever in heaven; and every son of man who is born of water and of the Spirit is made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.—*Ellicott*.

14. **As Moses lifted up the serpent**—By the light of subsequent revelation *we* know that this lifting up, shadowed by the serpent, was the lifting up upon the cross. Nicodemus doubtless understood that Jesus was to be held up and manifested to the world, but he could not understand that Jesus was to die substitutionally for the sinner.—*Whedon*. **So must the Son of man be lifted up**—Why *must*? The question Christ does not answer here, nor, so far as I can see, does the New Testament anywhere. It simply represents the atoning sacrifice of Christ as a necessity without explaining the grounds of that necessity. Comp. Luke 24. 26. That it is in the divine economy of grace an inexorable necessity is indicated even by the types of the Old Testament. Lev. 17. 11; Heb. 9. 22. The phrase "Son of man" was a common Jewish designation for the Messiah. It would have been so understood by Nicodemus.—*Abbott*.

15. **Whosoever**—This word transcends the limits set by the rabbis. Its only limit is humanity. **Eternal life** is the life of the soul, which disaster cannot impair nor death destroy—a present possession, not a future inheritance, except that it is a possession which grows in value and importance in the future.—*Abbott*.

Jesus died that we might live. Vers. 14, 15. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

16. **God . . . gave his only begotten Son**—The dread power that man has ever conceived—that is not God; the pursuing vengeance that sin has ever imagined—that is not God; the

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.	• whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.
17 For ¹⁰ God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.	17 For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

¹⁰ Luke 9. 56; 1 John 4. 14.

unsatisfied anger that sacrifice has ever suggested—that is not God. But all that human thought has ever gathered of tenderness, forgiveness, love, in the relation of father to only child—all this is, in the faintness of an earth-drawn picture, an approach to the true idea of God. Yes, the true idea is infinitely beyond all this; for the love for the world gives in sacrifice the love for the only-begotten Son.—*Watkins.*

17. Not . . . to condemn—This does not contradict 9. 39: "For judgment am I come into this world." Comp. Luke 9. 56. Since there are sinners in the world, Christ's coming involves a separation of them from the good, a judgment, a sentence; but this is not the *purpose* of his coming, the *purpose* is salvation. "Condemn" is too strong here for the Greek word, which is simply to *judge* between the good and bad; but the word frequently acquires the notion of "condemn" from the context. You might anticipate that the great King, sending his loyal Son into a revolted province, would commission him only to subdue and destroy; but so *thinking*, you would utterly misconceive the mission of the Son of God. The world's salvation, not its damnation, was the declared purpose, the sublime design of this wonderful mission.—*Cowles.*

Salvation is offered freely to all. Vers. 15, 16, 17. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

The day of small things is not to be despised. Ver. 2.—The Rev. John Holmes had an appointment to preach at Castlebar, Ireland. Arriving at the place, he found a congregation of *three*, to whom he preached with great fervency. One of the three was converted, and afterward attained to world-wide fame—the Rev. William Arthur, the eloquent author of the *Tongue of Fire*.

A blind man had an operation performed by which he eventually obtained his sight. But at first he experienced strange sensations of fear and terror. When he was blind he used to go about the town without a guide, in full confidence, but when his sight began to revive he felt alarm. He saw danger every-where until he got clearer vision and became used to it. The dawnings of spiritual vision are marked by similar timidity.

When the air-balloon was first discovered, a matter-of-fact gentleman contemptuously asked Dr. Franklin what was the use of it. He answered by asking the question: "*What is the use of a new-born infant? It may become a man.*" The Lord can cause the grandest issues to spring from insignificant beginnings.—*Spurgeon.*

We can only enter the kingdom of God by a spiritual birth. Vers. 3, 5, 6.—The passage from the mineral world to the plant or animal world is hermetically sealed on the mineral side. No change of substance, no modification of environment, no chemistry, no electricity, nor any evolution, can endow any single atom of the mineral world with life. As the door from the inorganic to the organic is shut, so that no mineral can open it, so the door from the natural to the spiritual is shut, and no man can open it. The plant stretches down to the dead world beneath it, touches its minerals and gages with life, and brings them up into the living sphere. The breath of God touches the dead souls of men, bears them across the bridgeless gulf, and develops within them faculties by which they *see the kingdom of God*.—*Drummond.*

A man buys a farm and finds an old pump in it. A person comes to him and says: "Don't use that water. Your predecessor used it, and it poisoned him and his wife and children." "Well," says the man, "I will remedy that." So he paints the pump and puttles the holes, and says: "Now it is all right." That is what sinners are up to—painting the pump by resolution, while the water is bad.—*Moody.*

One mark of the new birth is mystery. Ver. 8.—Mathematicians can go far in

describing the properties of curves; but fire a rifle, or twirl a coin, or toss a ball into the air, and, though every convolution exactly obeys mathematical laws, where is the Newton or the Leibnitz that could trace these in detail? The wind, in like manner, even to its faintest zephyr, obeys natural laws, chemical and dynamical; but who can pretend to trace their millionth part, or see aught in the wind but the symbol of the inscrutable?—*Guthrie*.

Spiritual truths need spiritual discernment. Vers. 11, 12.—A mathematician was taken by a musician to an extraordinary violin performance. The man of music was entranced, but when he turned to the mathematician and asked him whether the performance was not exquisite, he replied it was wonderful to see a man draw his elbow up and down twenty-nine hundred times.—*Dr. Green*.

While Turner, the great painter, was engaged upon one of his immortal works, a lady of rank, looking on, remarked: "But, Mr. Turner, I do not see in nature all that you depict there." "Ah, madam," answered the painter, "do you not wish you could?"—*Spurgeon*.

Gibbon says that a bag of shining leather filled with pearls fell into the hands of a private soldier when Galerius sacked the Persians. He carefully preserved the bag, but threw away its contents. Some men pass through life; they do not know when they come across true riches, or throw away the pearl of great price as a thing of little worth.

Jesus died that we might live. Vers. 14, 15.—History tells us of Darius condemning to the cross three thousand captives; of Alexander punishing Tyre by crucifying two thousand prisoners, till the crosses stood thicker on her bloody shores than masts in her crowded harbor; of the massacre in Jerusalem under Titus, until wood was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies. Yet had Babylon's, Tyre's, Jerusalem's—all these crosses, been raised to save you, and on each of these crosses a dying angel hung, here is greater love—CHRIST died for us.—*Guthrie*.

"Mamma," said a child to her mother, as she was being put to bed, "what makes your hands so scarred and twisted?" "Well," said the mother, "when you were a babe I heard a shriek up-stairs one night after I had put you to bed. I came up and found the bed was on fire and you were on fire. In tearing off the burning garments I twisted and scorched my hand till it has hardly looked like a hand since." I wish I could show you the burned hand and foot and brow and heart of Christ, burned in snatching you away from the flame.—*Talmage*.

Salvation is offered freely to all. Vers. 15, 16, 17.—A man at Malabar started to walk on spiked sandals four hundred and eighty miles to obtain peace. One day he halted under a shady tree, and heard a missionary preach from the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us," etc. He heard with excited interest, and finally threw off his sandals, crying aloud, "That is what I want."

I thank God for that word, "whosoever." If God had said there was mercy for Richard Baxter, I am so vile a sinner I would have thought he meant some other Richard Baxter; but when he says "whosoever," I know that includes me, the worst of all Richard Baxters.—*Baxter*.

A lady in Glasgow once asked Mr. Moody whether that word he was always using—"take"—was in the Bible or was it merely one he had got into the habit of using. He just turned to Rev. 22. 17, remarking, God says plainly, "Let him take;" and who can stop us if God says "Take?"

TEACHING HINTS.

Call attention to the line of events at this period in the life of Christ—the visit to Capernaum, the journey to Jerusalem, the first passover of the Saviour's ministry, cleansing the temple, and the miracles referred to in verse 2 of the lesson.

Describe the night visit. Who was the visitor? Why did he come at night? Was it because of an unwillingness to be known as an inquirer? Notice his spirit later in the Saviour's history, before the council and at the sepulcher.

The theme of our lesson is the **new birth**, that transformation of nature which is the experience of the Christian.

1. **Its necessity.** Vers. 1-3. In the kingdoms and commonwealths of earth, citizenship comes from birth. Every man born on the soil is a citizen of the land. In the kingdom of heaven citizenship is the privilege of birth, but it is through a new birth, a heavenly birth. Those born of God are the citizens of God's kingdom.

2. Its spirituality. Vers. 4-7. This new birth is not physical, but spiritual. From his earthly parents a man inherits according to the flesh; from the divine Spirit only can he receive the divine life. The soul must come into contact with God to receive God's likeness.

3. Its mystery. Ver. 8. This new birth cannot be apprehended by the natural man, for only the spiritual can discern spiritual things. People wonder at the change of the converted man, but they cannot explain it. A blind man must have his eyes opened before he can understand color; and a deaf man must be made to hear before he can understand music. Without this unearthing of the senses all is a mystery. Thus only those who are in Christ, and have passed from death to life, can understand what the life in Christ is.

4. Its reality. Vers. 9-12. Though mysterious, this new birth is a real experience. Those who have entered into the new life know it by a clear assurance, and can testify to it. The saved man knows that he has been saved, and confidently bears witness to it. Christian experience is the certain authority for Christian testimony.

5. Its prerequisite. Vers. 13, 14. There is a divine condition to be met before men can enjoy this high privilege of the new life. The Son of God must come down from heaven, and must be lifted up on the cross as a ransom for sinners. Through all the earthly life of Jesus the cross was standing in awful majesty at the end of his path, ever beheld as the prominent object of his vision.

6. Its condition. Vers. 15, 16. The sole condition for this high privilege of the new birth is *faith in Christ*. We must see Christ as our Saviour, cast ourselves upon him, commit our all to him, surrender ourselves to him as Master. Faith is the golden key that unlocks the door of hope.

7. Its result. Vers. 16, 17. Eternal life, the saved condition, comes to the soul that thus accepts Christ as its Saviour.

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LESSON V.—August 2.

CHRIST AT JACOB'S WELL.—JOHN 4. 5-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—REV. 22. 17.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—This interview between Christ and the Samaritan woman is reported alone by John. The time is uncertain; the only definite indication is that of verse 35, and the interpretation of that is uncertain. December, 27 A. D., is the most probable date.—*Ellisotti, Andrews, Abbott*.

PLACES.—1. The *Samaris* of this chapter is the province into which the kingdom of Israel had degenerated, and took its name from the ancient capital city. 1 Kings 16. 23, 24.

2. **Sychar** involves questions of great uncertainty. The word may be a variation of the name Sychem; but the Sychar of the text is more probably to be found in the modern village Askar, about half a mile north of Jacob's well. 3. **The parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.** 4. **Jacob's well** is one of the few spots about the position of which all travelers agree. Jesus, passing from south to west, would pass up the valley of *Mochna* until the road turns sharp to the west, to enter the valley of Sichem between Ebal and Gerizim. Here is "Jacob's field," and in the field is "Jacob's well." It is dug in the rock, and is about nine feet in diameter. The older travelers described it as more than one hundred feet deep, and with several feet of water. Modern travelers have generally found it dry.—*Watkins*. Originally a vaulted chamber, ten feet square and as many deep below the surface of the ground, formed the entrance to the well. The walls of this have fallen in, rendering access difficult. Leaping down into the ruined vault, I found two openings into the well through heaps of limestone blocks. Attaching a cord to a small tin bottle I lowered it to the depth of sixty-five feet, but found no water. On lowering it, however, through the other aperture, to the depth of seventy-five feet, I reached water, which was from three to five feet deep. During the week I spent at Nablous I never wearied in journeying to drink of its delicious waters.—*Bishop Newman*.

The Samaritans claimed to be descended from Joseph, with how much justice is a question much debated. Some maintain that they were of purely heathen origin, although they were driven by calamity to unite the worship of Jehovah with their own idolatries; and this view seems to be in strict accordance with 2 Kings 17. 23-41. Benegade Jews took refuge among them from time to time, but such immigrants would not affect the texture of the nation more than the French refugees affected the English. Our Lord calls a Samaritan a "stranger," literally, "one of a different race."—*Watkins*.

Authorised Version.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Sa-ma'ri-a, which is called Sy'char, near to the parcel of ground ¹ that Ja'cob gave to his son Jo'seph.

6 Now Ja'cob's well was there. Je'sus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

Revised Version.

5 So he cometh to a city of Sa-ma'ri-a, called Sy'char, near to the parcel of ground that Ja'cob gave to his son

6 Jo'seph: and Ja'cob's ¹well was there. Je'sus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat ²thus by the ³well. It was about the sixth hour.

¹ Gen. 28. 19; 48. 22; Josh. 24. 22.

¹ Gr. *spring*; and so in ver. 14; but not in vers. 11, 12.—² Gr., *as he was*.—³ Gr. *spring*; and so in ver. 14; but not in vers. 11, 12.

I. AT JACOB'S WELL. Verses 5-9.

5. **A city of Samaria**—City is used loosely, and must not be supposed to imply any thing large. Capernaum, which *Josephus* calls a village, the evangelists call a city. "Town" would be a better translation.—*Plummer*. **Ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph**—This is traditional. Jacob bought the ground of Shechem (Gen. 33. 18-20), and the bones of Joseph were brought by the tribes and buried there (Josh. 24. 32); and the whole region was included in the tribal inheritance of Ephraim, son of Joseph.—*Whedon*.

6. **Being wearied with his journey**—The commentators call attention to this weariness as an evidence of the reality of his humanity. It seems to me, when coupled with the prophecy of Isa. 53. 2, his apparent sinking under the weight of the cross, and his early death while the two thieves survived (Matt. 27. 32; Mark 15. 44; John 19. 32, 33), to be an indication that his physical frame was not robust, was not equal to the demands of the soul which it contained, and that, as a part of his human experience, he knew the peculiar sorrows which an intense and active mind feels when hindered by a weak bodily organization.—*Abbott*. The Orientals are wont to start their journeys with the early morning. A six hours' walk brought Jesus thus far, wearied and worn, so that he sat thus on the well (or by the spring), awaiting his opportunity for a draught of water.—*Cowles*. **About the sixth hour**—There appears to be no adequate reason for the opinion that has been advanced that John employs a different kind of reckoning from that common among the Jews, and means here six in the evening. It is true that the evening

Authorized Version.

7 There cometh a woman of Sa-ma'ri-a to draw water: Je'sus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy ment.)

9 Then saith the woman of Sa-ma'ri-a unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Sa-ma'ri-a? for ³the Jews have no dealings with the Sa-mar'i-tans.

10 Je'sus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest ³the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him,

Revised Version.

7 There cometh a woman of Sa-ma'ri-a to draw water: Je'sus saith unto her,

8 Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy 9 food. The Sa-mar'i-tan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a Sa-mar'i-tan woman? (⁴ For Jews have no dealings with

10 Sa-mar'i-tans.) Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou

³ 2 Kings 17. 24; Ezra 4. 3; Acts 10. 28.—³ Isa. 5. 6; 42. 6; Rom. 8. 22.

⁴ Some ancient authorities omit *For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.*

was the common hour of resort to the wells by the women, but evidently this conference was with Christ *alone*, an indication that the hour was not the evening hour, for then others would probably have been present also.—*Abbott.*

Because of his earthly experiences Christ has peculiar sympathy for us. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Jesus did not cure his weariness and thirst by a miracle. He sat and asked for a drink. The disciple is not better than his Master, and should not expect miracles to restore physical strength when exhausted by labor or disease.

7. In the East the towns are not supplied, as with us, by means of aqueducts and water-pipes, nor are individual houses furnished each with its well. The well itself is usually excavated from the solid limestone rock, and provided with a low curb to guard against accident. Exod. 21. 33. On such a curb Christ probably sat to rest. The well is ordinarily not furnished with any apparatus for drawing water. Each woman brings her own bucket, most commonly made of the skin of some animal; sometimes the well is shallow and she descends by steps made for the purpose (Gen. 24. 16), and dips the water up from the surface; if it is deep, she lets down her bucket with a rope. To assist in the work, a wheel or pulley is sometimes fixed over the well. A trough of wood or stone usually provides a means for watering cattle and sheep. Gen. 24. 20; Exod. 2. 16. In this case Christ had no bucket with him, and the well being deep, so that he could not descend into it, he had no means of obtaining water. Ver. 11.—*Abbott.* Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink—Observe how insignificant a request he makes the occasion for a deeply spiritual religious conversation; and how natural the transition from the material to the spiritual. Observe, too, that by asking a favor he opens the way to the granting of one. He thus verifies the truth that to gain another's good-will is not at first by *doing* but by *receiving* a kindness.—*Abbott.*

8. To buy—In Samaria they would find no hospitable entertainer; and they must purchase from the common purse, of which Judas was sooner or later the carrier.—*Whiston.* Meat means food, not necessarily flesh.

9. How is it—Feminine pertness. She is half amused and half triumphant.—*Cambridge Bible.* Being a Jew—This she would know from his dress and dialect. It has been noted that the Hebrew for "Give me to drink," *Teni lishekoth*, contains the letter Sin or Shin, which was one of the distinctive points in the Ephraimite pronunciation perpetuated in Galilee. They did not say Shibboleth but Sibboleth. Judg. 12. 5, 6. They would not say "Teni lishekoth," but "Teni lisekoth."—*Watkins.*

Prejudice against race is unjust and wicked. God made of one blood all nations of the earth; and our descendants will care no more for our prejudices than we do for those of the old Samaritans. The man of noble character is a noble man—whether Negro, English, or Chinese. Jesus had no sympathy with caste feeling.

II. THE LIVING WATER. Verses 10-16.

10. Thou wouldest have asked of him—Instead of His asking of *thee*. Spiritually our positions are reversed. It is *thou* who art weary and foot-sore and parched, close to the well,

Authorized Version.

and he would have given thee 'living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Ja'cob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Je'sus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But 'whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him 'shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Revised Version.

wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, 'Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast

12 thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Ja'cob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

13 Je'sus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water

14 shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing

^a Isa. 48. 3; 49. 3; Jer. 2. 13; Zech. 13. 1; 14. 8.—^b Chap. 4. 26.—^c Chap. 7. 38.

^d Or, Lord.

yet unable to drink; it is I who can give thee water from the well, and quench thy thirst forever. *Cambridge Bible.*

Christ exemplified the value of tact in dealing with human souls. See ILLUSTRATIONS. He is the model Teacher, and we should study his methods as carefully as his doctrines.

11. The woman saith—She perceives the double meaning, and queries which is the true sense. If it be the material water of this present well he means, he must make a deep draught with *neither rope nor bucket*. If it be some *transcendental, mystical, or immortalizing water* he means, he must be greater than the father of the tribes himself, who dug this wonderful well.—*Whedon*. She thinks of spring water as distinct from cistern water. Comp. Jer. 2. 13, where the two are strongly contrasted.—*Plummer*.

12. Art thou greater—The woman is as perverse as Nicodemus in misunderstanding spiritual metaphors, and far more loquacious.—*Plummer*. The language is that of badinage. It is analogous to that of Nicodemus in chapter 3. 4; though here commingled with irony there may well have been a real perplexity.—*Abbott*. Our father Jacob—She ostentatiously claims to be in the true line of descent from the great "father."—*Whedon*. Which gave us the well—This has no foundation in Scripture, but no doubt was a Samaritan tradition.

This feeling that what sufficed our fathers will do for us, for no one can be greater than they, is fatal to all progress in either material or spiritual things.—*Abbott*. It is the duty of each generation to make improvement on the methods of the last. No wrong can be made right simply because our fathers indulged in it.

14. Shall never thirst—Literally, *will certainly not thirst forever*, for the craving is satisfied as soon as ever it recurs.—*Plummer*. A well of water—It becomes a self-perpetuating supply. It satisfies once and forever. You will never even desire any thing better. There is life in it for the very soul. It meets and fills the greatest, deepest wants of your being. This is what Jesus meant by "living water;" his precious words contain the whole of this glorious priceless truth; but the woman of Samaria will need more help and more time to grasp these great thoughts as to the nature and the fullness of Christ's salvation.—*Cowles*. Springing up into everlasting life—Not that *eternal* life is some future result, to be realized hereafter; it is the immediate result. The soul in which the living water flows has eternal life.—*Cambridge Bible*.

The world disappoints, but Jesus satisfies. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Every adult knows by experience the truth of one half of this sentence; the smallest child and the oldest heartaching sinner may alike experience it all.

Authorised Version.	Revised Version.
15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.	15 up unto eternal life. The woman saith unto him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come
16 Je'sus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.	16 all the way hither to draw. Je'sus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband,
17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Je'sus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:	17 and come hither. The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Je'sus saith unto her, Thou
18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.	18 saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy hus-
19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.	19 band: this hast thou said truly. The woman saith unto him, 'Sir, I per-
7 Rom. 8. 23; 1 John 5. 20.—7 Luke 7. 16.	6 Or, Lord.—7 Or, Lord.

15. Give me this water—She still does not understand, but does not willfully misunderstand. This wonderful water will at any rate be worth having, and she asks quite sincerely (not ironically) for it. Had she been a Jew she could scarcely have misunderstood, this metaphor of "water" and "living water" is so frequent in the prophets. Comp. Isa. 12. 3; 44. 3; Jer. 2. 13; Zech. 13. 1; 14. 8. But the Samaritans rejected all the Scriptures but the Pentateuch.—*Plummer*.

There are many like her who would be glad of such a divine gift of religion as should take away all the labor and trouble of Christian life. "That I come not hither to draw" is the desire of thousands who want the results of right living without the trouble of living aright.—*Boecher*.

III. THE TRUE WORSHIPERS. Verses 16-26.

16. Go, call thy husband—Not that the man was wanted, either as a concession to Jewish propriety, which forbade a rabbi to talk with a woman alone, or for any other reason. But by a seemingly casual request Christ lays hold of her inner life, convinces her of sin, and leads her to repentance, without which her request, "Give me this water," could not be granted. The husband who was no husband was the plague spot where her healing must begin.—*Plummer*.

Conviction of sin must precede conversion. If we confess our sins "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1. 9. When Christ came to bring this water of life to the world he began by preaching the duty of repentance. Matt. 4. 17; Mark 1. 15.

Observe Christ's uniform way of dealing with skepticism. Its root is in sin; and he addresses not the reason, but proceeds directly to convict the conscience. It is only the sinner conscious of sin who ever truly finds a divine Saviour.—*Abbott*.

17. The reply is no longer prefaced by the half sarcastic "Thou, being a Jew," or the reverential "Sir." The tone has passed from vivacity to earnestness, and from earnestness to sadness. That one word—what a history it has revealed!—*Watkins*. Perhaps it was because she felt herself to be in a presence which would pierce through all disguises that she at once brought out the truth; or did she suppose that this statement would foreclose further inquiry?

18. Five husbands—To be understood quite literally. They were either dead or divorced.—*Plummer*. Not thy husband—Observe the severity in fact and the gentleness in form of Christ's rebuke. It shows a full knowledge of her sin, yet it is couched in the language not of condemnation but of commendation.—*Abbott*. In that saidst thou truly—Better, *this* (one thing) thou hast said truly. Christ exposes the falsehood which lurks in the literal truth of her statement.—*Cambridge Bible*. At Jesus's words her whole life's history of guilt rises up so vividly to her view that she verily believes that *it was he who told her the whole!* See ver. 29.—*Whedon*.

19. I perceive that thou art a prophet—Note the gradual change in her attitude of mind toward him. First, off-hand pertness (ver. 9); then respect to his gravity of manner and serious words (ver. 11); next a misunderstanding belief in what he says (verse 15); and now, reverence for him as a "man of God." Compare the parallel development of faith in the man born blind (John 9) and in Martha (John 11).—*Plummer*.

Authorised Version.

20 Our fathers worshiped *in this mountain; and ye say, that in ¹⁰Je-ru'-sa-lem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Je'sus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ¹¹ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Je-ru'-sa-lem, worship the Father.

Revised Version.

20 ceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Je-ru'-sa-lem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Je'sus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Je-ru'-sa-lem, shall ye worship the Father.

⁹ Gen. 12. 6; Judg. 9. 7.—¹⁰ Deut. 12. 5; 3 Chron. 7. 12.—¹¹ Mat. 1. 11; 1 Tim. 2. 8.

20. Here is a strange sudden turn in the conversation; and yet not so strange as at first appears. There are a hundred reasons for diverting this prophet from an inspection of her unsavory life to a great fundamental question, on which all religion must depend. There was no other religious teacher of her day who would have thought the salvation of this woman's soul to be at all comparable in importance to this question of temples and orthodoxy; and if we have loftier ideas of morality and religion than she we get them from this conversation.—*R. R. D.* No expression of deep penitent emotion is indeed recorded; but her testimony in verse 29, and her intense action, 28-30, are full proof that the words of this verse are an earnest inquiry, "Is salvation from Samaria or from the Jews?"—*Whedon.* Our fathers worshiped—It is a nice natural touch that here gives the past tense to the Samaritans ("worshiped") and the present to the Jews ("ye say"). The Samaritan temple had been in ruins for a century and a half, while Jesus was now on his return from Jerusalem, where the Jews' temple was at the very height of its glory.—*R. R. D.* In this mountain—Gerizim; her not naming it is very life-like.—*Plummer.* She might point out "the holy mountain," with the ruins of the temple, from where she stood.—*Ellicott.* Ye say—Here is then the great debate between *Our fathers* and *Ye say*; between "this mountain" and "Jerusalem." But if even in this age, when prophecy has long ceased, a true prophet has appeared, then we may get at last some light.—*Whedon.* Calvin suggests four errors into which men are apt to fall from blindly following the "fathers," all illustrated by the Samaritans: (1) When pride has created a false custom or religion, the history of the fathers is ransacked to find justification for it; (2) when men imitate the example of the evil-doers because they are ancient, forgetful that they are worthy to be reckoned as fathers who are true sons of God; (3) when we imitate the conduct but not the spirit of the fathers, as if one should defend human sacrifice from the example of Abraham in Gen. 22. 1-10; (4) when we imitate the conduct of the fathers without considering the change of circumstances, as when the Christian Church attempts to copy the ceremonials of the Jewish. None of these are true imitators of the fathers; most of them are apes.—*Abbott.*

Our fathers worshiped. The argument of "our fathers" has always proved strong. Opinions, like electricity, are supposed to descend more safely along an unbroken chain. That which our ancestors believed is apt to seem necessarily true; and the larger the roots of any belief the more flourishing, it is supposed, will be its top.—*Beecher.*

The Samaritan woman a bad example. It is nineteen hundred years too late to evade a practical religious duty by raising a theoretical question in theology; and yet how many unconverted people try to avoid conviction in this way.

21. The hour cometh—Christ decides neither for nor against either place. The utter ruin on Gerizim and the glorious building at Jerusalem will soon be on an equality. Those who would worship the Father must rise above such distinctions of place.—*Plummer.* This prophecy was speedily fulfilled, perhaps in the life-time of this woman.—*Abbott.* The wonderful words of verses 21, 23, 24 seem to breathe the spirit of other worlds than ours—"of worlds whose course is equable and pure;" where media and vehicles of grace are unneeded, and the soul knows even as it is known. There is nothing so like them in their sublime infinitude of comprehension, and intense penetration to the deepest roots of things, as some of the sayings in the Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 5. 45; 6. 6. It is words like these that strike home to the hearts of men as in the most literal sense divine.—*Sanday.*

Locality shall have nothing to do with religion. A universal God shall receive a universal worship.—*Whedon.* No longer in this nest alone, or in that, shall religion be looked for, but, escaping

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
22 Ye worship ¹² ye know not what: we know what we worship; for ¹³ salvation is of the Jews.	22 Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know: for
23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in ¹⁴ spirit and in ¹⁵ truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.	23 salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth: ¹⁶ for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers. ¹⁷ God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship in
24 God ¹⁸ is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship <i>him</i> in spirit and in truth.	24

¹² 2 Kings 17. 29.—¹³ Isa. 2. 2; Luke 24. 47; Rom. 9. 4, 5.—¹⁴ Chap. 14. 17; Rom. 8. 4; 1 Cor. 4. 17; 2. 16; Gal. 5. 25; Phil. 3. 3.—¹⁵ Chap. 1. 17.—¹⁶ Acts 17. 24-29; 2 Cor. 3. 17.

¹⁶ Or, for such, the Father also seeketh.—¹⁷ Or, God is spirit.

from its shell, heard in all the earth, in notes the same in every language, flying unrestrained and free, the whole heavens shall be its sphere and the whole earth its home. This is the first gleam of a new morning.—*Beecher*.

Christ answers the woman's question, not by pointing out the right place of worship, but by inculcating such a conception of the true nature of worship that the controversy respecting Gerizim and Jerusalem shrinks into insignificance. The solution of many theological problems is to be found, not in any answer, but in a new, a higher, a more spiritual, conception of religion.—*Abbott*.

22. Ye worship ye know not what—More accurately and far more beautifully, *that which ye know not*. As if he had said: "Even if, because of your ignorant sincerity, your prayer, though offered to a narrow, factitious, Samaritan deity, reaches up through the mists and darkness to the true God; that true God, whom you thus successfully worship, ye do not truly know."—*Whedon*. The Samaritan religion, even after being purified from the original mixture with idolatry (2 Kings 17. 33, 41), remained a mutilated religion.—*Plummer*. **We—We Jews. Salvation is of the Jews**—All correct knowledge of the character, attributes, and dealings of God possessed by the world to-day has come through the Jewish people by means of the Old and New Testaments. See Rom. 8. 1, 2; 9. 4, 5. I think it is historically demonstrable that Judaism is the source of all monotheistic religion.—*Abbott*.

It is needful to know what we worship. Unless there be knowledge it is not God that we worship, but a phantom or idol.—*Calvin*.

23. The hour cometh, and now is—The local worship on Gerizim and Zion may continue for a while; but already a few are rising above these externals to the spirit of true worship.—*Ellicott*. Worship in spirit is in contrast with a worship in the flesh, the essence of which consists in the rite, language, and posture (comp. Rom. 12. 1; Phil. 3. 3, 4; Heb. 9. 9, 24); worship in truth is one which, in its character, harmonizes with the nature of him who is worshiped. The Lycaonians would have worshiped Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14. 11-13) in sincerity, but not in truth.—*Abbott*. Place, time, words, postures, sounds—all things from without—are important only in so far as they aid in abstraction from the sensible world and in elevation of the spirit. The moment they distract they hinder true worship.—*Plummer*. **The Father seeketh**—Three times in succession Christ speaks of God as *the Father* (vers. 21, 23); probably this was quite a new aspect of him to the woman. The Lord's Prayer and the parable of the prodigal son are the best comments on this passage.

God looks for worship. Work without worship is not enough.

God is our Father. That is an old truth to all our scholars, but how far do they realize it? How far does their teacher realize it? The yearning of the human spirit is that of a child seeking his Father. The Father also seeketh his child. "God is not Vengeance to be appeased, nor Power to be dreaded, but Love to be received."

Sincerity is not the only requisite to acceptable worship. The cruellest bigots were sincere. Acceptable worship must harmonize with the nature of the God to whom we offer it.

24. God is a Spirit—Better, God is *spirit*. This declaration is fundamental, and radically inconsistent with (1) all scientific theories which represent him as an abstract impersonal force; (2) with all metaphysical refinements which, ignoring his personality, treat him as a "power that



"I THAT SPEAK UNTO THEE AM HE."

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
25 The woman saith unto him, I know that "Mes-si'as cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.	25 spirit and truth. The woman saith unto him, I know that Mes-si'ah cometh (which is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us
26 Je'sus saith unto her, "I that speak unto thee am <i>he</i> .	26 all things. Je'sus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am <i>he</i> .

²⁵ Deut. 18. 15; Dan. 9. 24.—²⁶ Mark 14. 61; chap. 9. 37; 10. 36.

makes for righteousness," or as "the highest dream of which the human soul is capable;" (3) with much of the received theology, which often assumes that God is like nature, and deduces his attributes from such an imaginary likeness; (4) with all idolatry, whether the idol be in the imagination or in wood, stone, or canvas. But it justifies us in looking to man's spiritual nature to interpret the divine nature to us. The spirituality of God is abundantly taught in the Old Testament, but by implication only. The abstract statement occurs only here and in 2 Cor. 3. 17.—*Abbott*. Worship ceases to be in sacrifices and ritualities. Those who would worship God acceptably must give him their heart's homage in spirit and in truth. The old Judeo-Samaritan issue is swept away, and new light breaks forth.—*Cowles*. Even to the chosen three Christ imparted no truths more profound than these. He admits this poor schismatic to the very fountain-head of religion.—*Plummer*.

God esteems the intent of the heart beyond outward appearance or expression. See ILLUSTRATIONS. How futile in the light of this passage are the forms on which so many even to-day depend for salvation. The spiritual God can only be worshiped in his true temple, "which temple ye are." Is the Shekinah enshrined in your heart?

But Christ does not condemn the proper employment of rites, only the spirit of ritualism. He would be a poor general who trusted in perfect drills and uniform equipments; and he would be a silly general who gave no thought to these.

Christ bases our knowledge of God on three facts—That he is "Spirit;" that he is "the Father;" and that he is revealed to us by the Hebrew Scriptures and the Hebrew Messiah.—*Abbott*. In the same way we may safely introduce him to those who do not "know" him.

25. The woman saith—She was made dizzy by his discourse, and fainted at its sublimity.—*Chrysostom*. She is puzzled by these new doctrines, and feels, half unconsciously, their power.—*Watkins*. I know that Messiah cometh—Jews and Samaritans shared this blessed knowledge. She uses the Jewish name ("The Anointed One"), using it to a Jew.—*Plummer*. The Samaritan name was "the Returning One" or "the Restorer," and they vaguely expected Moses to come again.—*Abbott*. Which is called Christ—Probably a parenthetical explanation of the evangelist's, not the woman's.—*Cambridge Bible*. All things—In a vague, colloquial sense.—*Plummer*. No conviction on any topic has been so wide-spread among men as the expectation of the advent of a divine Guide.

26. I... am he—There is here no reference to the divine name "I AM." Exod. 3. 14; Deut. 32. 39.—*Watkins*. This declaration contrasts strangely with Matt. 16. 20; 17. 9; and Mark 8. 30. Some reasons for the difference: (1.) The Galileans wanted to "take him by force to make him a king;" the Samaritans "could make no political capital out of him." (2.) This sinful woman's heart was ready to receive a spiritual Messiah; the Galilean public was not. (3.) He "bore witness of himself;" as yet the disciples were not spiritually fit to make him known promiscuously; (4.) Months were yet to be spent in Galilee and Jewry; his stay in the center of Samaria must be short.

Christ reveals himself to great sinners. See ILLUSTRATIONS. For this purpose he came into the world. Self-righteousness effectually bars the God of love and pardon from the human heart. Humility and penitence are the only doors which he enters. We should ask, not, "How good am I?" but "How contrite am I?" See Psa. 34. 18; 51. 17; Isa. 57. 15; Matt. 5. 3, 4, 6; and countless other passages.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

From his earthly experience Christ can sympathize with us. Ver. 6.—The story goes that Henry VIII., wandering the streets of London in disguise, was met at the bridge foot by some of the watch, and, not giving a good account of himself, was carried off to the Poultry Compter and shut up for the night without fire or candle. On his liberation he made a grant of

thirty chaldrons of coal and a quantity of bread for the solace of night prisoners in the Compter. —*Spurgeon*. His prison experience gave him sympathy.

At St. Helena Napoleon found a slave, a gardener, in whose history he became deeply interested. He was a Malay Indian who had been stolen from his native land by a British vessel. The captive emperor's sympathies were deeply moved by the old man's story. *They were fellow-captives*, and their common experience led to a mutual attachment. —*Abbott*.

Christ exemplified the value of tact in dealing with souls. Ver. 10.—The Rev. Edward Irving once inveigled to his church a cobbler, who professed infidelity, by talking to him about leather. Irving's father was a tanner, and his acquaintance with leather was of old standing. "What do ye ken about leather?" was the first word from the cobbler that indicated a breach in his disdain of the clergy. As the conversation proceeded the shoe-maker exclaimed, "Odds! You are a decent kind of fellow! Do you preach?" Finally he went to church, and justified himself by saying, "He's a sensible mon—he kens about leather."

Talent is something, but tact is every thing. It is not a sixth sense, but it is the life of all the five. It is the open eye, the quick ear, the judging taste, the keen smell, the lively touch. It is useful in solitude, for it shows a man his way into the world; it is useful in society, for it shows him his way through the world. Talent is power; tact is skill; talent knows what to do; tact knows how to do it; talent is wealth; tact is ready money. For all the practical purposes of life tact carries it against talent—ten to one.

The world disappoints, but Jesus satisfies. Vers. 13, 14.—The food on which the earliest Greeks fed was afterward given to swine as civilization advanced. The leathern and iron money of Sparta was soon forgotten after silver and gold came into circulation. So when one has come into God's kingdom Christ's love dislodges that which before was valued, and makes its "beggary elements," as dross to gold, as acorns to the finest wheat.

Take away a toy from a child and give him another and he is satisfied; but if he be hungry no toy will do. The world's toys do not meet the cravings of a soul. —*Newton*.

What man would dare say of physical things, "If any man lacks knowledge let him come to me." Neither Humboldt nor Liebig nor Agassiz would dare say this even of the departments in which they are pre-eminent. Yet Christ appeals to the soul with all its yearnings, its depths of despair, its infinite outreachings, which nothing can satisfy this side the bosom of God, and says, "If any man thirst let him come unto me." He stands over against whatever want there is in the human bosom, whatever hunger in the moral faculties, whatever need in the imagination, and says, "He that believeth on me shall never thirst." —*Beecher*.

God esteems the intent of the heart beyond outward appearance or expression. Vers. 23, 24.—Of all earthly music, that which reaches the farthest into heaven is the beating of a living heart. —*Beecher*. God sees in winter all the flowers which are yet sleeping beneath the soil. So he sees our heart-life. Purposes are roots and germs, without which blossoms and fruitage could not come.

I have read of one who offered his prince a great sum of money to have leave to come into his presence and say, "God save your majesty!" The prince, wondering at the large offer, asked him what advantage would accrue. "O sire," saith he, "this will get me a great name in the country for one who is a favorite at court, and bring me more than it costs me." So some men outwardly draw nigh to God, but are actuated by sinful motives. —*Gurnall*.

Christ reveals himself to great sinners. Ver. 26.—After the Chicago fire a great many things were sent thither from all parts of the world. The boxes they came in were labeled, "For the people who were burned out," and all a man had to do was to prove that he had been burned out and he got a share. So all you have to do is to prove that you are poor, miserable sinners, and there is help for you. —*Moody*.

TEACHING HINTS.

Describe Jacob's well; and give a word-picture of the scene, as Jesus sat by the well, and the woman drew near.

There are two aspects in which this lesson may be taught. We present both, though either alone would be sufficient for the teacher in the class. These two points of view are *The Saviour* and *The Sinner*.

I. The Saviour. There are three pictures of Christ in this story.

1. *A weary Saviour.* There is something suggestive in the fact of the Saviour's weariness. It shows that he was thoroughly human, our brother-man. It was our Brother who talked by the well, walked among men, died on the cross, rose from the tomb, ascended into heaven. We can feel toward him, and call upon him, as our Brother.

2. *A working Saviour.* All exhausted though he was, he forgot his physical condition when a needy soul came in sight. He saw a nature in deeper hunger than his own, and at once the weary one was transformed into the working one. Notice some traits of his work at the well. 1.) It was *way-side* work; he had not come to that place for work, but was resting, when a soul came across his path. 2.) It was *individual* work; for a single soul. He did not wait to gather the whole city, but talked with one woman. 3.) It was *lovely* work; for an outcast sinner, a woman who was doubtless immoral. 4.) It was *skillful* work; how carefully he spoke with her, how gradually he drew her thought from the water of the well to the water of life, and to the recognition of her guilty past. 5.) It was *successful* work, resulting in the woman's salvation, and, through her, in faith in Christ among her people.

3. *A wonderful Saviour.* 1.) Wonderful in his insight, reading the record of a life, and seeing the needs of a soul. 2.) Wonderful in the depth to which he could reach down to this prodigal daughter in the slough of sin. 3.) Wonderful in his revelation of himself and of his Father's will. 4.) Wonderful in his transforming power: she who came a sinner went away a missionary. 5.) Wonderful in the height to which he could lift up this soul to the glories of heaven and eternal life!

II. As a second theme we take the sinner, and find it scarcely less fruitful than the former topic. John's gospel is always individual in its sketches of character. Every person shown on John's page has a distinct personality. This was no common woman. She was quick in power of repartee, strong in natural insight, a woman of force of character. How marked her contrast with the slow-witted Nicodemus! Notice the stages in her spiritual condition.

1. *A careless sinner.* Ver. 7. She came to the well without a thought that the crisis of her life was upon her; just as many a man enters a church without thinking that he will be convicted of sin before he goes away.

2. *A captious sinner.* Ver. 9. She wonders that a Jew should speak to a Samaritan woman, and is disposed to object on points of etiquette and formality. How often is the same spirit shown when the subject of religion is broached!

3. *A curious sinner.* Vers. 11-15. Not curious as an object of interest, but in the sense that her curiosity was aroused. She was curious to know what the stranger meant. She saw that he was no common man, and was eager to understand his words. See how the Saviour utilized this element in her nature to lead her on to deeper inquiries.

4. *A convicted sinner.* Ver. 17-20. She was now awakened to her true condition, as is clearly shown in verse 20. There our lesson leaves her, but we could doubtless go further, if the story were told fully, and find—

5. *A converted sinner.* For we notice that she became not only a believer, but also a worker for Christ.

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LESSON VI.—August 9.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY—JOHN 5. 17-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.—Matt. 28. 18.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—The exact date of the miracle which led to this discourse is not easily fixed. Probably A. D. 28.

THE PLACE was the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Jesus had cured an impotent man who had been laid at a porch of Bethesda, waiting for the angel whom the superstitions of the country expected to come down periodically and touch the pool with healing properties. The miracle had been performed on the Sabbath, and the Pharisaic Jews complained because of this offense against their traditional rules. When their complaints were made the reply of Jesus gave them renewed offense, for he made himself equal to God. We are to regard this as a sort of specimen discourse—one of many which were given in response to the accusations of the Jews. *Dr. Conybeare* says: His response took the case quite out of their jurisdiction. If Jesus had a right to say what he said, they would touch him at their peril. He does not attempt to show that this healing was an act of mercy; that it was kindness to the man to allow him to take away all the little property he had in the world; that such a case of healing might properly be attested before the people by this manifestation of restored strength. On the contrary, Jesus rises at once to the dignity of the Son of God. This discourse is a chain of reasoning, every point bearing upon the relation of the Son to the Father as worthy of equal honor, and as amply justified, therefore, in his great work on the Sabbath. Nor can we fail to see its incidental bearing as proof of his true divinity—none the less forcible for being *incidental*—an assumption underlying the entire argument.

Authorized Version.

17 But Je'sus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only

Revised Version.

17 But Je'sus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I

work. For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, be-

¹ Chap. 9. 4; 14. 10.—² Chap. 7. 18.

I. POWER GIVEN TO CHRIST. Verses 17-23.

17. The argument is very brief; it is based on the premise that we are to be followers of God as dear children (Eph. 5. 1); that the Father's work is a pattern for our own working. The divine work does not cease; the grass grows, the buds swell, the flowers bloom, the fruits ripen, the rains fall, the winds blow—but all this is the work of love; over all this work God's tender mercies brood. Psa. 145. 9. The lesson of nature interpreted here by Christ is that the true work of love is never a violation of the true Sabbath law. This verse, with Matt. 12. 8 and Mark 2. 27, gives the three canons for the Christian observance of the Sabbath. (1.) The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath. It is, then, a Christian day, belongs to the Christian dispensation, is under the lordship of Christ and in his kingdom, and is to be kept in that joyous spirit of freedom with which Christ makes free. (2.) The Sabbath is made for man. It is therefore man's day; belongs to all men, Gentile and Jew, poor and rich; a day to be used for man; so that whatever work is necessary to the real abiding welfare of the human race is not foreign to this day. (3.) My Father worketh hitherto. The Father's work is the example and the law for his children; the work of love, the work for others, the work that has tender mercy for its inspiration and its overseer, is Sabbath work. It is to be our rest-day; a prophesy of that eternal rest which will be one of glorious activity; a rest from care, from worldliness, from the common temptations of life, but not a day of mere dull cessation of labor.—*Abbott*.

18. Therefore—Better, for this cause. The more—Comp. Mark 3. 6. This seeking to

Authorized Version.

had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, 'making himself equal with God.

19 Then answered Je'sus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For 'the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For as the Father raiseth up the

Revised Version.

cause he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God,

19 Je'sus therefore answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth, in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel. For as the Father

³ Zech. 12. 7; chap. 10. 20; Phil. 2. 6.—⁴ Chap. 8. 28; 9. 4; 12. 49; 14. 10; Eph. 2. 9.—⁵ Matt. 2. 17; chap. 3. 29; 2 Pet. 1. 17.

kill is the blood-red thread which runs through the whole of this section of the Gospel. Comp. 7. 1, 19, 25; 8. 37, 40, 59; 10. 81; 11. 53; 12. 10.—*Plummer*. Had broken the Sabbath—Literally, *was loosing or relaxing*. The Pharisaic Sabbath had to be relaxed. But we are most of us to-day in danger of tending toward the opposite extreme. Let us, in *Norman McLeod's* language, be as broad as the charity of Almighty God and as narrow as God's righteousness. **MAKING HIMSELF EQUAL**—On the same level.—*Meyer*. On an equality.—*Norton*. Of the same nature and condition.—*Robinson*. They fully understand the force of the parallel statements, "My Father is working; I am working also." The Jews understand what the Arians [like the modern Unitarians] fail to understand.—*Augustine*.

The blinding, maddening power of sin leads to rejection and hatred of Christ. Christ is God incarnate, God is love, holiness, justice, mercy. Those who love these traits cannot but love Christ, as their only perfect Exemplar.

19. **The Son can do nothing of himself**—Observe, he did not reply, You misunderstand me; I by no means arrogate to myself equality with God; I would not be understood to put my defense on that footing. This he does *not* say; but, on the contrary, with most solemn asseveration he declares, The Son does nothing of his own motion; originates no plans; strikes out into no schemes of his own, but simply follows the example of his Father. Some readers will perhaps raise the question, In what precise sense does Jesus speak of himself as "the Son?" On this question we must choose between three possible (or supposable) alternatives: (a) As the divine Logos—the eternal Word—simply and only, with no reference to a human nature. (b) As human only—the mere Man of Nazareth, born of Mary. (c) Or as not only born of woman, but as having no father other than God—being, therefore, the divine Logos in mysterious union with the babe of Bethlehem. Of these three, we must doubtless accept the latter as being the only alternative which is in harmony with the inspired statements, Matt. 1. 18, 20-23, and Luke 1. 35, and (what is not less decisive) the only one which corresponds with the views given us in our author John, in his expressive language, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory—the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." John 1. 14.—*Cowles*. **What he seeth the Father do**—A familiar description—borrowed from the attention which children give their father—of the inner and immediate intention which the Son perpetually has of the Father's will, in the perfect consciousness of fellowship of life with him.—*Meyer*. Christ's personality is a paradox, beyond our finite understanding, and it is only made more inexplicable by denying either his divinity or his humanity.

21. The following verses (21-29) show what the greater works (ver. 20) are. They are the resurrection and the judgment; but these are regarded as spiritual as well as physical, as present as well as future. Once again the background of the thought is to be found in verse 17. Resurrection and judgment were the work of the Father—"My Father worketh hitherto"—but the manifestation in limits of space and time is the work of the Son—"and I work."—*Ellis*. It is simply impossible for the thoughtful reader to take verses 21-25 and verses 28, 29 in the same

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
dead, and quickeneth <i>them</i> ; even <i>so</i> the Son quickeneth whom he will.	raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom
22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath <i>'</i> committed all judgment unto the Son;	22 he will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all
23 That all <i>men</i> should <i>'</i> honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.	23 judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father
24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; <i>'</i> but is passed from death unto life.	24 which sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out
25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when <i>the</i> dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.	25 of death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they

^a Luke 7, 14; 8, 54; chap. 11, 25.—^b Matt. 11, 27; chap. 2, 25; 17, 3; Acts 17, 31; 1 Pet. 4, 5.—^c Matt. 28, 19; 1 John 2, 22; Rev. 5, 8.—^d 1 John 2, 14.—^e Gal. 2, 20; Eph. 2, 1, 5; 4, 14; Col. 2, 12; Rev. 2, 1.

sense. The resurrection here is figurative; there it is literal. What could "the hour is coming and now is" (ver. 25) mean, if Jesus were here speaking of the physically dead? What would "the resurrection of damnation" (ver. 29) mean, if Jesus were there speaking of those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Our Lord's argument is similar to that used on another occasion—"Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Rise up and walk?" Jesus can give life to a dead soul; and we need not marvel, for we will yet see him give life to all that are in the graves. *Quickeneth* means "giveth life to."

Christ is the source of the inner spiritual life. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

22, 23. For the Father judgeth no man—Rather, for *not even doth the Father* (to whom judgment belongs). He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him—Better, *which sent him*. He who does not recognize in Christ the Son of the Father, the true image of the divine glory, has either no true conception of the Son or none of the Father; for the only way to the Father is the Son. And, in fact, those forms of theological doctrine which have tended to belittle Christ have also tended, in the history of the Church, to dwarf worship.—*Abbott*.

The final destiny of men will be fixed by Christ. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

II. LIFE THROUGH CHRIST. Verses 24-30.

24. He that heareth—We see from this that "whom he will" (ver. 21) implies no arbitrary selection. It is each individual who decides for himself whether he will hear and believe.—*Plummer*. Believeth on him that sent me—Omit "*on*," there is no preposition in the Greek. Hath everlasting life—Everlasting life is already in him. That *life* is a present possession which heaven will perpetuate. As eternal death is upon the unbeliever until he is converted, so eternal life is in the believer so long as he is a believer and does not apostatize. When a man is converted his death is removed; when a believer loses his faith his eternal life is removed from him.—*Whedon*. Shall not come into condemnation—Better, *cometh not into judgment*. There can be no good reason why the word should be rendered judgment in the twenty-second verse, and condemnation in the twenty-fourth.—*Maurice*.

The believer has complete safety in Christ. See ILLUSTRATIONS. And no Christian should live amid daily apprehension of evil, either temporal or eternal. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

25. This verse is really a repetition of verse 24 in a more definite form, with a cheering addition; verse 24 says that whoever hears and believes God has eternal life; verse 25 states that already some are in this happy case.—*Plummer*.

Authorized Version.

26 For as the Father hath "life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, "because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And "shall come forth; "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

30 I can of mine own self do nothing:

Revised Version.

26 that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself: and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is

28 "the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, 29 and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have "done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment.

30 I can of myself do nothing: as I

¹¹ Acts 17. 31. —¹² Dan. 7. 13. —¹³ 1 Cor. 15. 52 —¹⁴ Dan. 12. 2.

¹ Or, a son of man. —² Or, Practised.

26, 27. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself—This should be rendered, "For as the Father is the fountain of life, so hath he given to the Son to be a fountain of life."—*Norton*. This must be regarded rather as a paraphrase than as a translation, but it embodies well the meaning of the verse, as indicated by the context. No man is a fountain of life to any other man. He may be a conduit but not a source. It is given to Christ to be a source of life himself to others. We live only as we draw continuously our life from God; to the Son the Father has given life in such a sense that he becomes himself the life of the world, and thus the life-giver to the dead.—*Abbott*. Because he is the Son of man—Rather, Because he is a son of man; that is, not because he is the Messiah, but because he is a human being.—*Sanday*. See Heb. 5. 15: "We have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was tempted," etc. With infinite confidence will all the intelligent universe trust him forever to administer the final judgment in the truest sympathy for our race and never with undue severity—inflicting never one pang of suffering in excess of what justice must demand. That he will care tenderly for those who love and trust him, who shall ever doubt? O, how will he gather them under his sheltering wing and hold their souls sweetly calm and joyful under the blast of the great trump of doom, amid the opening of countless graves, the waking of the dead of all the ages, and the wreck of worlds!—*Cowles*.

28, 29. Marvel not—Let it not surprise you that the Father hath given me power to speak dead souls to life, for he hath given me the power to bring dead bodies from their graves.—*Cowles*. The hour is coming—He does not add "and now is," for he seems to be here speaking of a literal resurrection.—*Plummer*. In which all that are in the graves—A description entirely definite and unambiguous.—*Cowles*. All, whether believers or not, must rise. These words certainly imply a "coming forth" which precedes the judgment. They are intensely dramatic; "an hour," "a voice," a judicial resurrection. They that have done evil—Rather, *practiced worthless things*. There is a deep truth here. The righteous have *done* good—their fruit remains; the wicked have only *practiced* evil—their works do not follow them. The wheat is garnered into the store-houses, the chaff is destroyed. Damnation—Literally, *judgment*. The test, and the only test of character which the New Testament recognizes, is that of *fruit in the actual life*. Matt. 7. 20; 12. 33; 25. 31-46; Eph. 5. 6; 1 John 3. 7, 8. The works of righteousness are the fruits of the Spirit; his gracious influences are received into the soul by faith, but the evidence of the abiding of that Spirit consists in the manifestation of these fruits in a righteous life. John 15. 1, 2, 6; Gal. 5. 22-24; Jas. 2. 14-26.—*Abbott*.

Scripture teaches a general resurrection. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Maintain this blessed doctrine with emphasis. But it is questionable whether a discussion of the question, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" can be conducted with profit in the hurried half hour of Sabbath-school study.

30. I can of mine own self do nothing—Because he is "the Son" he cannot act independently.—*Plummer*. As I hear, I judge—Christ is the image of the Father, and his voice

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.	hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.
¹⁸ Matt. 24, 29.	

is the echo of the Father's voice.—*Abbott*. My judgment is just—It cannot be otherwise, for it is the declaration of that which the Father communicates to him. Its accordance with the divine will is the strongest possible guarantee of its justice.—*Plummer*.

Unselfish seeking of the Father's will is the great clarifier of the moral judgments of the disciple.—*Abbott*. Impress on your scholars the thought that consecration to God's cause and dependence on his providence are the best safeguards against error of judgment as well as against moral wrong-doing.

Do not attempt to explain the mystery of the incarnation.—Without controversy, great is that mystery. An intricate theological discussion often does more harm in a Bible-class than all the rest of the study can do good.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Christ is the source of the inner spiritual life. Ver. 21.—Standing by the telegraphic wires one may hear the mystic wailing of the winds among them, but one knows nothing of the message which is flashing along them. The wire may look like that used for fences, but it is in connection with a mighty power which sends communications swift as lightning and far-reaching. So there is a hidden life, with its divine communings, its swift heart-throbs of heaven-horn desire, dwelling in believers, which flesh and blood cannot discern.

The pilgrims in Bunyan's allegory gazed with puzzled astonishment on the fire which blazed brightly while water was being poured on it. The mystery was solved, however, when they were conducted outside the building and saw a man sending in large supplies of oil to the fire-place through a secret channel. So with all who have spiritual life; it is given and sustained by One who feeds the strength of all his saints.

The believer has safety in Christ. Ver. 24.—An American subject may be safe although surrounded by enemies in a distant land. A despot on his throne, a horde of savages in the desert, have permitted a helpless traveler to pass unharmed because they knew his government's watchfulness and feared its power. The power thus wielded by earthly rulers may symbolize the perfect protection of Omnipotence. Christ is the safety of a Christian.—*Arnol*.

When the Rev. Dr. John Brown lay on his death-bed one asked: "Are you not afraid to appear before the tribunal of God?" He replied: "Were I looking to give the account in my own person, considering my sins, I might well be terrified; but I view Christ the Judge as my Advocate and Accountant, and I know that I do not owe more debt than he has paid.

A poor woman made complaint to the sultan that after sleeping she awoke to find every thing lost. "Wherefore did you sleep?" inquired the sultan. "Sir," was the response, "I slept because I thought you were awake." He restored what she had lost. God is our keeper.—*Christian Age*.

Scripture teaches a general resurrection. Ver. 28.—Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection not in books alone, but in every leaf in spring-time.—*Luther*.

The Emperor Theodosius, having on a great occasion opened all the prisons and released his prisoners, is reported to have said, "And now would to God I could open all the tombs and give life to the dead!" But there is no limit to the mighty power of Jesus; he opens the prisons of justice and the prisons of death with equal and infinite ease.—*Stamford*.

In the laboratory of Faraday a workman one day knocked into a jar of acid a little silver cup; It disappeared, was eaten up by the acid, and could not be found. The question came up whether it could ever be found. The great chemist came in and put certain chemicals into the jar, and every particle of the silver was precipitated to the bottom. The mass was then sent to a silversmith and the cup restored. If Faraday could precipitate that silver and restore that cup cannot God restore our sleeping dust?

TEACHING HINTS.

Keep in mind, and keep before the class, the general order of events in the life of Christ. This lesson belongs to the second year of Christ's ministry, known as the Year of Popularity, mostly passed in Galilee. Present a general view of the events of the year.

This teaching, however, was given at Jerusalem, perhaps on the occasion of the second pass-over, and in connection with the miracle at the Pool of Bethesda. Tell the story of the miracle, and show how it led to the conversation of which a part is given in the lesson.

The general theme of this lesson is Christ's authority as the Son of God. The teacher will notice in the presentation of the thought John's peculiar method, called by some expositors "his spiral movement." He returns to the subject after three or four verses, on the way taking up another subject; then returns to that in turn while taking up a third, and so on, gathering up and recalling each theme while unfolding a new one. We have here:

1. **The Son's work.** Vers. 17-20. Jesus tells the Jews that he works as his Father works, with no cessation or Sabbath rest, because all his work is for the good of man. God sends sunshine and rain alike on the Sabbath and through the week. Just to the measure in which our aims are Christ's aims, and our work is Christ-like, not for self but for others, whether for the bodies or for the souls of men, we may pursue it on God's day.

2. **The Son's unity with the Father.** Vers. 18-20. He who appeared among men as Jesus of Nazareth lived and wrought in close communion with God, with all the fellowship of the Son and the Father. What Jesus did on earth was the manifestation of God.

3. **The Son's life-giving power.** Vers. 21, 24, 26. Life can come only from life, and from life of the same kind and degree. A stone cannot give life; nor can a tree give animal life; nor can a mere animal rise into spiritual life. Only He who is "the Life" can impart that divine life to men.

4. **The Son's honor.** Vers. 20-28. There is a large painting, by Verestchagin, representing the homage paid to the Prince of Wales in India as the son of the empress. God's Son came into this world, and should receive honor from the sons of men, for he is Lord of all.

5. **The Son's judgment.** Vers. 22, 27, 30. Christ is more than a titular sovereign, expecting honor. He is a judge, empowered to represent his Father in rule. The Prince of Wales in India could not interfere with the lowest officer of the government. But Jesus Christ was a judge while on the earth; he is a judge now; and he will sit on the judgment-seat at the end of the world to judge every man.

6. **The Son's voice.** Vers. 25, 28, 29. We have here the picture of the scenes which shall precede and accompany the last judgment—the voice which even the dead shall hear; the opening graves; the rising bodies reunited to their several souls; and the multitudes divided into the two great classes, "they that have done good" and "they that have done evil. How and when it shall come to pass no man knoweth, but that it will come to pass rests on the assurance of Holy Writ.

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LESSON VII.—August 16.

THE FIVE THOUSAND FED.—JOHN 6. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—I am that bread of life.—John 6. 48.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Probably March or April, 29 A. D. See verse 4. But John is not careful to mark the precise interval between the various scenes of his narrative. Chronology is not what he cares to give us.—*Pummer*.

PLACES.—1. **The Sea of Tiberias.** John, writing for Gentile readers, gives the name by which this body of water was best known in the Gentile world. The eastern shore was not populous; it is to this day comparatively a solitude. See **CONNECTING LINKS**. The city of Tiberias was built in our Lord's life-time by Herod Antipas, who named it in honor of the reigning emperor. 2. **The mountain** means probably not a peak, but the mountainous region just back of the shore. The location was probably the rich level plain of Butaiha, forming a triangle, of which the eastern mountains make one side and the lake shore and the Jordan the other two. It was at the south-eastern angle of this plain, near the point where the hills abut upon the lake, that the miracle took place.—*Abbott*. From the four narratives of this stupendous miracle we gather: First, that the place belonged to Bethsaida; second, that it was a desert place; third, that it was near the shore of the lake, for they came to it by boats; fourth, that there was a mountain close at hand; fifth, that it was a smooth, grassy spot, capable of seating many thousands. Now all these requisites are found in this exact locality, and nowhere else, so far as I can discover. This Butaiha belonged to Bethsaida. At this extreme south-east corner of it the mountain shuts down upon the lake, bleak and barren. It was, doubtless, desert then as now, for it is not capable of cultivation. In this little cove the ships (boats) were anchored. On this beautiful sward, at the base of the rocky hill, the people were seated.—*Andrews*. A topographical difficulty is presented by an apparent, but not real, inconsistency between Luke 9. 10 and Mark 6. 45. Recent scholarship has shown that there were two Bethsaiidas—that "of Galilee" (John 12. 21; Mark 6. 45; Matt. 11. 12) and Bethsaida Julias, at the north end of the lake, a little city rebuilt by Herod Philip in honor of Julias, the daughter of Augustus. The name, which means "Fish-town," seems to have been frequently repeated, as names of settlements in our country now often recur.

CONNECTING LINKS.—The feeding of the five thousand is the one miracle related in every gospel. See Matt. 14. 13-21; Mark 6. 30-44; Luke 9. 10-17. The student will, of course, distinguish it from the feeding of the four thousand. Matt. 15. 32, 39; Mark 8. 1-9. The historical connection with what precedes is not the same in the four accounts. Here it is in connection with the miracles at Bethsaida, and probably after the death of John the Baptist; in Matthew it is in connection with the death John of the Baptist; in Mark and Luke it is after the death of John the Baptist, but in connection with the return of the twelve.—*Pummer*.

Authorized Version.

1 After ¹ these things Je'sus went over the sea of Gal'i-lee, which is *the sea of Ti-be'ri-as*.

2 And a great multitude followed him,

Revised Version.

1 After these things Je'sus went away to the other side of the sea of Gal'i-lee, which is *the sea of Ti-be'ri-*

2 as. And a great multitude followed

¹ Matt. 14. 15; Mark 6. 35; Luke 9. 10.

I. THE MULTITUDE. Verses 1-7.

1. **After these things**—See **CONNECTING LINKS**. Went over the sea of Galilee—From the western side, where lay the Galilean homes of Jesus, to the north-eastern shore.—*Cowles*.

2. **A great multitude**—This is explained by the facts (1) that the Baptist had been put to

Authorized Version.

because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

8 And Je'sus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And ²the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 When ²Je'sus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Phil'p, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

Revised Version.

him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.

8 And Je'sus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the passover, the feast

5 of the Jews, was at hand. Je'sus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Phil'p, Whence are we to buy ¹ bread, that these may

² Lev. 23. 5, 7; Num. 9. 16; Deut. 16. 1; chap. 2. 13; 5. 1;
—² Matt. 14. 14; Mark 6. 35; Luke 9. 12.

¹ Gr. *loaves*.

death, and many of those who had followed him would now follow Christ; (2) that the twelve had now returned from their ministry in the towns and villages of Galilee; (3) that the Passover was at hand, and numbers would be flocking from northern Palestine to Jerusalem. The usual caravan road was on the eastern side of the lake, and the throng would steadily increase.—*Watkins*. Followed . . . saw . . . did—Better, *were following . . . were beholding . . . was doing*. He continued healing the sick, and the crowds continued to follow.

God makes use of our physical needs and our lower mental appetites to bring us up to the highest spiritual plane. Diseased men early crowded about the Prophet of Nazareth because they had heard he could heal them. Hungry people followed him to be fed. Would not more needy people flock to our churches to-day if Christians were more like Christ? Not many men have ever been converted while suffering from hunger. Many a revival has been killed at the outset by a chilly church. If one desires to bring sinners to Christ he must look after the welfare of their bodies. If you desire those who are in spiritual trouble to confide in you, sympathize with their physical and intellectual and social needs.

Curiosity and excitement sometimes lead men to Jesus. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Thoughtful Christians need not be disturbed by such unseemly excitement as sometimes attends revivals of religion, for God uses all the mental and emotional peculiarities of men as highways to their hearts. "Some men buy excitement at five cents a glass, and some at three dollars a night at the box-office, with reserved seats; some for ten cents a copy, bound in yellow; others prefer it at revival meetings, where a noble heart glows from contemplation of duty."—*Haynes*. He whose great desire is to prepare the way of the Lord will not be diverted from his purpose by any other man's eccentricities. Our one object as Christians is to bring together the Saviour and the sinner.

4. The Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh—This affords both a note of time and an explanation of the multitude present. The month was Nisan (our March). The grass was green, the trees were in full leaf, the palm-trees were laden with blossoms, the orange and lemon trees with fruit, the barley was ripening in the fields. At such a season and in such a climate to spend a night without shelter is no hardship, and is not unusual. The leisure of the Oriental is partly a characteristic of the people, partly an incident of a climate which compels less labor than ours. The fifteen days preceding the passover were largely devoted to various preparations for it; the roads, streets, and bridges were repaired, and the caravans began to move toward Jerusalem. The gathering at such a time of a congregation of five thousand men, besides women and children, attracted by the fame of such a prophet, is not strange.—*Abbott*. John groups his narrative around the Jewish festivals.

Nearly all men feel their need of eternal life, and many would eagerly embrace the Messiah if they only recognized him. Here were these Jews journeying to the Passover, which was the recognized prophecy of the very Man whom they were passing by on their way to Jerusalem.

5. When Jesus then—Better, *Jesus therefore having lifted up his eyes and seen that a great multitude cometh*.—*Plummer*. He saith unto Philip—Why Philip? As Judas kept the bag it is not unlikely that Philip commonly provided food for the party. Besides, he was a native of this region, and might be supposed to know its possibilities for food.

Learning the poverty of our own resources is a step toward being filled. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.

6 (And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.)

7 Phil'p answered him, "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: "but what are they among so many?

Revised Version.

6 eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would

7 do. Philip answered him, Two hundred 'pennyworth of 'bread is not sufficient for them, that every one

8 may take a little. One of his disciples, An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's

9 brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are

^a Num. 11. 21, 22. — ^b 2 Kings 4. 42.

^c See marginal note on Matt. xviii. 28. — ^d Gr. loaves.

7. Philip answered him—Christ's question does not suggest to Philip the true answer of divine sufficiency, but leads him to think of the human difficulty. He looks on the vast throng of people. At the lowest estimate it would take the value of two hundred *denarii* to feed them—in present money value, nearly thirty-five dollars; in actual labor value, nearly a working-man's yearly wages.—*Ellicott*.

Philip's common sense is praiseworthy. He was lacking in spiritual penetration or he would not have answered this question of Christ's in so prosaic a manner. Nevertheless many a church property would have been saved to its members who through their lack of worldly wisdom lost it, if in their official board there had been three or four Philips, who in every emergency counted how many pennyworths of bread would be necessary to meet the need.

Oddly enough, Philip seems not to have dreamed of the possibility of a miracle. "Thirty-four dollars' worth of bread is needed," he says; and by inference, "Where can we get thirty-four dollars?" In our clearness of secular vision let us not be blind to spiritual facts.

II. THE LOAVES. Verses 8-11.

8, 9. One of his disciples—There seems to have been some connection between Andrew and Philip (1. 44; 12. 22). In the lists of the apostles in Mark 3. 18 and Acts 1. 13, Philip's name immediately follows Andrew's.—*Plummer*. The brief conversation between Jesus and some of his apostles which is partially recorded here may be completed by reference to the other gospels. Jesus asked Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" Ver. 5. Philip, a man who always seems to have displayed slow spiritual perceptions but clear practical sense in worldly matters, responded (in modern phraseology), "It will take thirty-four dollars' worth of bread to give a small lunch to each one." When Christ said, "Give ye them to eat," the apostles exclaimed with surprise (according to Mark), "Shall we go and buy thirty-four dollars' worth of bread?" Then Jesus said, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." And Andrew, having ascertained, makes the report of verse 9. Five barley loaves, and two small fishes—This was evidently their own ordinary supply, and it proves how economically they lived, for these were barley loaves, and barley was the food of the poor. John 6. 9; 2 Kings 4. 42; Judg. 7. 13; Ezek. 13. 19. The loaves were really biscuit, not unlike our "pilot bread." Roman soldiers were sometimes punished by receiving barley bread instead of wheat. The fishes (small, according to John) were probably dried. Around the Sea of Galilee the salting and preserving of small fish was a special industry. "Half a dozen soda crackers and two sardines," would be a fair modern colloquial rendering of Andrew's answer.

To share what we have, not to aspire to give what we have not, is true benevolence. Christ "was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." "For our sakes" he trampled on social distinctions wherever he found them to be unjust. And where they could not be ignored, he generally identified himself with the poorest class of society. Doubtless this also was "for our sakes." He might have changed these barley crackers into wheat cakes, and fed the multitude on a banquet of royal dainties, but he used his eternal riches to supplement his temporal poverty rather than to turn that poverty into worldly wealth. Let us learn a lesson from his conduct.

"There is a lad here." Jesus never ignores the lad. No one is so insignificant as to be useless in his work. Further, Jesus never ignores what a person has on hand. He did not need these five loaves and two fishes. He might have made all as well as the greater part; but he ignores no talent.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
10 And Je'sus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.	10 these among so many? Je'sus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number
11 And Je'sus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.	11 about five thousand. Je'sus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.
12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.	12 And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over,
* Exod. 17. 25; 1 Tim. 4. 5.	

10. **Make the men sit down**—It requires little imagination to picture the questioning surprise with which the disciples prepared to obey this strange direction, and the perplexity of the people as they took their places, wondering what was to occur next. They sat down, Mark tells us, "in ranks," literally, *in garden plats*. The bright-colored Oriental dresses of these men, sitting cross-legged on the ground in groups of fifty each (Mark 6. 40), so that their number was afterward easily estimated, presented an appearance which recalled a brilliant garden in the early summer. The picture thus presented by Mark, but lost in our English translation, is one of the pictorial characteristics of his gospel, and thought to have been derived by him from Peter, the most effective, and therefore probably the most pictorial, of all the apostolic preachers.—*Abbott*. **There was much grass**—This we might expect early in April. Ver. 4: Though called a "desert" by the other evangelist, we are to think of it rather as a wilderness—a deserted place. **So the men sat down**—The word means *men* as distinct from women. See also Matt. 14. 21.—*Ellicott*. Because of the universal contempt of womanhood in the East the men only would be numbered. Most of those who went up to the passover were men.

The five loaves and two fishes were probably the entire worldly provisions of all the disciples.

What would the Master say concerning your bank account, furniture, and clothing were he to become an inmate of your home to-morrow? But is he not an inmate of your home?

"**Make the men sit down.**" If we could get the world to sit down and partake of the provisions that God has prepared, we would have brought the millennium already; but men are pressed with business; they are driven from week's end to week's end; they are nervous and restless and fitful in their minds. They cannot be made to sit down. If these men in the wilderness had remained in the buzz and discomfort of the crowd, not one of them would have been fed. Their sitting down and quiet arrangement was necessary to their partaking of the rich provision of Christ. Let us apply the moral to our own case.

11. **When he had given thanks**—He that enjoys aught without thanksgiving is as though he robbed God.—*Talmud*. It seems clear that this giving of thanks for blessings of the food (Luke 9. 16) was the *means* of the miracle, because (1) all four narratives notice it; (2) it is pointedly mentioned again verse 23; (3) it is also mentioned in both accounts of the feeding of the four thousand. Matt. 15. 36; Mark 8. 6.—*Nummer*. "May God bless what he has given us," is a frequent formula in "saying grace" in the East.

We should cultivate a spirit of thankfulness. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Many a person who thinks himself devout has grumbled when he has had no better food than bread and fish. Jesus looked to heaven and thanked God.

Earthly supplies are insufficient to our spiritual requirements. It would have made no difference if this "lad" had had fifty barley loaves and twenty small fishes, the miracle would have been needed in any case. And it is as easy for an omnipotent God to supply the needs of those who want every thing as the needs of those who think they are partially supplied.

III. THE FRAGMENTS. Verses 12-14.

12. **Gather up the fragments**—Only John tells of this command, but all the evangelists tell that the fragments were saved. This has been noticed as a strong mark of truth, for no

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
13 Therefore they gathered <i>them</i> together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.	13 that nothing be lost. So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over
14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Je'sus did, said, This is of a truth 'that Prophet that should come into the world.	14 unto them that had eaten. When therefore the people saw the 'sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world.

¹ Gen. 49. 10; Deut. 18. 15, 18; Isa. 7. 14; 9. 6; 25. 6; Matt. 11. 2; chap. 1. 31; 4. 19; 7. 40.

² Some ancient authorities read *signs*.

romancer, who had imagined such a miracle-working power, would couple with it the necessity for frugality. It is interesting to note the "custom and rule among the Jews" (*Lightfoot*) that when they ate together they should leave something to those that served.

With hungry souls and faithful teachers there need be no spiritual starvation. There are two ways of treating the seed. The botanist discourses of its characteristics; the farmer eats and sows, sows and eats. So with the Gospel. A critic dissects it; to him the letter is dead; he neither lives on it himself, nor spreads it for the good of his neighbors; he neither eats nor sows. The disciple of Jesus, hungering after righteousness, takes the seed whole; it is bread for to-day's hunger, and seed for to-morrow's supply.—*Arnol*.

Against waste. Jesus was careful about the fragments. Let us never waste that which is left. "The increase of the bounty of God should not be an incitement to luxury."—*Calvin*.

13. Baskets—Wallets such as every Jew carried, when on a journey, to keep himself independent of unclean Gentile food. Each of the twelve doubtless gathered into his own wallet. The baskets used after the miracle of the four thousand were of another sort, being each large enough to hold a man. Mark tells us that fragments of fish were gathered also. The remnants far exceed in quantity the original store.—*Cambridge Bible*.

14. That Prophet—Foretold in Deut. 18. 15, 16, and referred to by the delegation sent from Jerusalem to inquire of John the Baptist as to his character and authority. John 1. 21. By some rabbis this prophet was regarded as a forerunner of the Messiah. Here apparently the people regarded the two as identical.—*Abbott*. Our Lord has performed a miracle; and at once he is hailed as the Messiah. But it is as the Jewish, not the Christian, Messiah. The multitude would take him by force and make him king. At last they have found the leader who will lead them victoriously against the Romans and "restore the kingdom to Israel." And just because he refused to do this we are told a few verses lower down that many of his disciples "went back and walked no more with him." It is this contrast between the popular Messianic belief and the sublimated form of it, as maintained and represented by Christ, that is the clue to all the fluctuations and oscillations to which the belief in him was subject. This is why he was confessed one day and denied the next.—*Sanday*.

Manifestation of power impresses even thoughtless observers. Jesus might have talked all day without making as deep impression on the minds of these men as that which this miracle made. So now one thorough conversion—one life turned from sin to godliness—is worth a thousand sermons.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Curiosity and excitement sometimes lead men to Jesus. Ver. 2.—A revival has lately been going on in the old martyr Churches of Bohemia and Moravia. The Protestant community at Horjitz in Bohemia is but ten years old, and owes its origin to a stone-mason. He was cutting an inscription on a tombstone for a Protestant family when the words awakened a desire within him to see the book from whence they were taken. He obtained a New Testament, and got his neighbors to read it with him. Finally he joined the nearest Protestant church, eight miles off, held private meetings in his house, was denounced by the priest, turned out of his lodgings, and deprived of work. The Evangelical Continental Society learned the facts, and sent a minister to Horjitz. Under his labors the good work goes on.—*Brown*.

A celebrated evangelist, face to face with the culture of Harvard, was accused of leading audiences into excitement. "I have heard," said he, in reply, "of a traveler who saw a woman weeping and beating her breast. He ran to her and asked, 'What can I do for you? What's wrong?' 'My child is in the well! My child is in the well!' Assistance was swiftly given, and the child rescued. Farther on he met another woman wailing also and beating her breast. He earnestly asked, 'What is your trouble?' 'My pitcher is in the well! My pitcher is in the well!'" Our great social and political excitements are all about pitchers in the well, and our religious excitements are about children in wells.—*Joseph Cook.*

The blacksmith cannot weld two pieces of iron while they are cold; when red-hot a couple of blows do it.

Christ seeks to do good to the bodies as well as to the souls of men. Vers. 2, 5.—In the preface to M. de Liefda's work on *The Charities of Europe* he says, "Nowhere can a better proof of the divine origin of Christianity be found than in the story of its charitable institutions. This work is exclusively its own. Such things were never known in the most civilized heathendom, nor even in Israel before He appeared who taught his people to love their enemies, care for the poor, and seek after the harlot and the sinner. In London alone fifty million dollars are annually expended on public and private benevolences, and one million people receive medical advice gratuitously every year."

Learning the poverty of our own resources is a step toward being filled. Vers. 5-7.—Some living creatures maintain their hold on flat surfaces by a method that seems like magic. A fly marching at ease on a plastered ceiling, and a mollusk sticking to the smooth, water-worn surface of a basaltic rock, while the long swell of the Atlantic at every point sends a huge billow waving and hissing over it, are objects of wonder. It is emptiness that imparts strength to these feeble creatures. A vacuum, on the one side within a web-foot, and on the other within the shell, is the secret of their power. By dint of that emptiness in itself the creature easily climbs to the rock, making all the strength of the latter its own. The moment it becomes full it drops off. It is the self-emptiness of a humble soul that brings the Redeemer's strength in.—*Arnol.*

As a party of ladies and children stood upon a wharf they suddenly heard a loud splash followed by a piercing scream. Turning round they saw a young man struggling in the water. He could not swim, and in his frantic efforts to rescue himself was only getting deeper in the water and farther from the shore. The ladies ran for help, but could only find one man, an old sailor, who stood motionless watching the man drown before his eyes. When the young man ceased trying and his hands fell helplessly by his side, the brave sailor leaped in, seized the victim, and bore him safely to the shore. He explained: "I waited until he ceased trying to save himself; for I could only save him when he was without strength."—*Bibb.*

We should cultivate the spirit of thankfulness. Ver. 11.—A little boy, taking a walk one bright morning when the sun was shining in its power and all nature seemed to smile in beauty, turned to his mother and said: "Mother, I see a doxology—praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Chrysostom died on his way to exile with his favorite expression on his lips: "*The Lord be praised for every thing.*"

TEACHING HINTS.

This is the key to all the miracles, as the parable of the sower is the key to all parables. The Rosetta stone gave the clew to all the ancient monuments, because one of its inscriptions translated another. This is the only miracle whose spiritual meaning was given at length by Christ, as the next lesson will show. Hence it suggests the law of correspondence by which all the miracles are to be interpreted.

Describe the scene of the miracle: the grassy plain, the multitudes, the Saviour and the twelve, the boy with the loaves, and the groups of people.

We reserve the deeper spiritual lessons of the miracle for the next lesson, which gives the divine interpretation. We treat the event as showing the traits of Christ.

1. **His attractiveness.** Ver. 2. There was something in Jesus which drew all men after him. With some it was his mighty works; with others it was his wondrous works; with still others it was his divine personality. He drew men toward him by what he was. His power to draw the hearts of men is not spent, after eighteen hundred years of exercise.

2. **His sympathy.** Vers. 1-5. He felt the needs of the people before they themselves felt them. He realized at once their physical want and their spiritual hunger. See Mark 6, 34. He still sees this hungry, suffering world with a deeper insight into its true needs than its acutest thinkers. There is no leader in the cause of the people who feels the woes of the masses as Christ on his throne feels them.

3. **His forethought.** Vers. 5-7. Christ not only foresaw the hungry multitude, but also provided for it. Practical Philip could tell how much would be needed; but only Jesus "knew what he would do." In the miracle is a picture of salvation. Long before man's fall, even before the foundation of the world, the redemption was provided. The bread of life was ready when men hungered for it.

4. **The use of instrumentalities.** Vers. 8-11. He might have fed the people with his own hand, but preferred to unite his disciples with himself. He breaks the bread and his ministers distribute it. Even a boy (how glad that boy must have been!) has a part in feeding the multitude. Thus men are co-workers with God. We cannot save souls, but we can bring to them the bread of life.

5. **All-sufficiency.** Vers. 12-14. Probably the fragments were gathered to show that all had received an abundant supply. Just as in the sun are light and heat enough for all the worlds and enough to spare for the open space in the solar system, so the grace of Christ is not only abundant, but superabundant. There is all that the world needs, and ten thousand times more.

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LESSON VIII.—August 23.

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.—JOHN 6. 26-40.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Lord, evermore give us this bread.—John 6. 34.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—April, 29 A. D., closely following the incidents of the last lesson.

PLACE.—Capernaum, on the north-western side of the lake of Tiberias. It was formerly identified with *Khan Minyeh*; but it is now generally believed to have stood on the site called *Tell Hum*.

CONNECTING LINKS.—Jesus departed in haste from the multitude he had miraculously fed because of their endeavors to make him king. These Galilean pilgrims were ripe for revolution, and would have gladly marched to Jerusalem with their new-found King at their head. In the evening, while he was still in seclusion, his disciples started across the lake back to Capernaum. A violent storm arose. Jesus walked toward them upon the sea, and, seeing their terror, said, "It is I; be not afraid." They gladly received him into the ship, and "immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." The multitude followed with diligent search, and, finding him at Capernaum, asked, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" Christ's reply is given in this lesson.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
26 Je'sus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.	26 Je'sus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and
27 Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but ¹ for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: ² for him hath God the Father sealed.	27 were filled. Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the Father, even God, hath
<small>^a Or, Work not.—¹ Chap. 4. 14; Rom. 6. 23.—² Matt. 2. 17; 17. 5; Mark 1. 11; 9. 7; Luke 2. 29; 9. 25; chap. 1. 32; 5. 27; 8. 16; Acts 2. 22; 9 Pet. 1. 17.</small>	

I. EARTHLY BREAD. Verses 26-31.

26. Not because ye saw the miracles—Better, *not because ye saw signs*. They had seen the miracle, but it had not been a sign to them; it had excited in them nothing better than wonder and greed.—*Plummer*. Did eat . . . were filled—For the stomach's sake they would make him king, and for that same sake they tracked him across the lake and are here before him. He points them to an effort for the higher boon within his gift as *Son of man*, of which this lower is but the type and yet the pledge.—*Whedon*.

With a purpose and spirit so low and animal these men were beneath the reach of the Father's drawings. They had no susceptibility for those drawings to take hold of; just as wood is unaffected by the attraction of the magnet.—*Whedon*. If any of our scholars or ourselves are asleep to spiritual influences it is because our lower natures, in some form, triumph.

Spiritual ignorance causes men to miss higher values. See ILLUSTRATIONS. A man requires some artistic sense to be able to properly estimate even the financial value of a painting or a statue; and without an alert and sensitive spiritual nature no man can rightly value any phase of eternal truth.

27. Labor not—Better, *work not*. The people keep harping on the word "work." See vers. 28, 29, 30. The entire clause might better be thus punctuated: *Work—not for the meat which perisheth, but—for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life*. This makes our Lord (not to forbid labor for bodily food, but) command solely labor for eternal life. It limits his command to seeking the heavenly; it does not make him prohibit a due attention to the earthly.—*Whedon*. Meat should be "food." "Flesh-meat" is not intended. Comp. 4. 13, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." The discourse with the Samaritan woman should be compared throughout; "the food which abides" here corresponds with "the living water" there; "the food that perisheth" with the water of the well. "Perisheth" not merely in its sustaining power, but in itself: it is digested and dispersed. Matt. 15. 17; 1 Cor. 6. 13.—*Plummer*. Endureth—Abideth. Unto indicates the purpose for which it remains; namely, that it may nourish eternal life, the life which continues unto (not which begins in) eternity; for eternal life is a present possession. Vers. 47, 54. This food abides in us. Chaps. 5. 38; 6. 56; 8. 31; 15. 4, 7; 1 John 2. 6, 27; 4. 13, 15; 2 John 2 indicate both what is the meat and what the abiding of which Christ speaks.—*Abbott*. For him hath God the Father sealed—In the East the method of authenticating a document is not, as with us, by a signature, but by the impression of a seal. 1 Kings 2. 8; Esth. 8. 12; 8. 8, 10; Jer. 32. 10. The meaning here, then, is that Jesus's commission as the Messiah of God is authenticated by the Father by the works given him to do. John 5. 36.—*Abbott*.

Show how Jesus had been authenticated to the Jews as the true giver of this food "(1) by direct testimony in the Scriptures; (2) by the same in the voice from heaven at his baptism; (3) by indirect testimony in his miracles and Messianic work;" and show in how many ways he has been authenticated to each of your scholars.

"The world passeth away." See ILLUSTRATIONS. This is a truth that will not make much impression on your class if their teacher has always lived as if the world endured forever.

We should live for the important things. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God?

29 Je'sus answered and said unto them, This 'is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What 'sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our 'fathers did eat manna in the desert; as is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Revised Version.

28 sealed. They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may

29 work the works of God? Je'sus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom 'he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou?

31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.

²⁸ 1 John 3. 23. — ²⁹ Matt. 12. 28; Mark 8. 11; 1 Cor. 1. 22. — ³⁰ Exod. 16. 15; Num. 11. 7; Neh. 9. 15; 1 Cor. 10. 2. — ³¹ Ps. 78. 24.

¹ Or, *he sent*.

Christ is the only way to heaven. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Men may say "Lo, here!" and "Lo, there!" moral and social reforms may dazzle enthusiastic minds; the Church may fall in hours of emergency; but notwithstanding all temporary obstacles or snares the eternal truth remains: He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by him.

28. Then said they—They said *therefore*. They see that his words have a moral meaning; they are to do works pleasing to God. But how to set about this?—*Plummer*. Christ tells them, verse 27, to work (labor) a divine work for eternal life; they here, in reply, ask how they shall work this godly work. They seem for one hopeful instant disposed to direct their view to the higher object. Jesus grasps at it in the next verse, and makes one effort to bring them to himself. This is the crisis of their destiny.—*Whedon*.

29. Believe on him—To these men this was an explanation too condensed to be overlooked and too clear to be misunderstood. Fresh from the great miracle under whose influence they were confessedly acting, he places the offer of divine life, through faith in himself as God's own Son, before their acceptance so plainly that they completely see it and finally reject it.—*Whedon*.

Faith in Christ and not human merit saves. See ILLUSTRATIONS. This cannot be too frequently reiterated. Faith in Christ is the great saving work. Faith and work are one. Faith is the work in which all work is embodied. Let there be a true perfect faith, and all works of righteousness will come into it and be one with it. Upon such faith God forgives; by such a faith man is graciously held just; consequent upon such faith is present and eternal salvation.

30, 31. What sign—Their enthusiasm had cooled, their curiosity had increased, during the night. After all, the feeding of the five thousand was less marvelous than the manna, and Moses was not the Messiah.—*Plummer*. "Can you, like Moses, furnish us a free maintenance for life from the skies?" The bountiful rural repast he has already furnished induces them to think that he can. The reality of that sign they do not propose to question but to waive; but if he will additionally accord to them manna or bread for their future living, then shall he be their crowned Messiah. The perplexity of a Strauss, how these men should ask for a sign when they had just seen and tasted so great a sign as the miraculous bread, manifests a comprehension not much higher than theirs. Our fathers did eat manna—Just so. In the middle of the second month after their start from Egypt, the Israelites went forth one morning and found a *small round thing* upon the ground, and they cried, (*Man-hu?*) "What is this?" And they found that it was bread ruined from the skies; and their question, *Man-hu?* manna, became its name. Exod. 16. 14, 15. And this bread was their food until their arrival under Joshua at Gilgal. "The manna ceased on the morning after they had eaten of the old corn of the land, neither had the children of Israel manna any more." Josh. 5. 12. The only trace left on earth of its existence was (Exod. 16. 32) an omer thereof, kept by Jehovah's command, "for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth out of the land of Egypt." The different vegetable productions to which, from some apparent suiting to the Scripture description the name manna has been applied, have no other title to the name than resemblance.—*Whedon*. He gave them bread from heaven to eat—A rough quotation

Authorized Version.

32 Then Je'sus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Mo'ses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Je'sus saith unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall

Revised Version.

32 Je'sus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Mo'ses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven.

33 For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and

34 giveth life unto the world. They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore

35 give us this bread. Je'sus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never

36 thirst. But I said unto you, that ye have seen me, and yet believe not.

37 All that which the Father giveth me

1 Chap. 4. 14; 7. 37.

of Psa. 78. 24. They artfully suppress the nominative (which in the Psalm is "God") and leave "Moses" to be understood.

II. HEAVENLY BREAD. Verses 32-40.

32, 33. **Moses gave you not**—Christ quite understands their insinuation; they are comparing him unfavorably with Moses. He denies both their points: (1) That Moses gave the manna; (2) that the manna was in the truest sense bread from heaven.—*Plummer*. The true bread—The real bread, of which the heaven-descended manna was an emblem.—*Whedon*. The bread of God is he which—Better, the bread of God is that which. Christ has not yet identified himself with the bread: it is still impersonal.—*Cambridge Bible*. Giveth life unto the world—Without this Bread mankind is spiritually dead; and this is the point of the argument (the introductory "for" shows that the verse is argumentative): we have proof that it is the Father who gives this really heavenly Bread, for it is his Bread that quickens the whole human race.—*Plummer*.

34. **Lord, evermore give us this bread**—Not spoken ironically (*Calvin*), nor with a definite idea of some miraculous kind of sustenance, a magic food or means of life from heaven (*Alford*, *Meyer*), nor with a serious comprehension of his spiritual meaning and a sincere desire for his spiritual gift (*Maurice*, *Lücke*). The people were shallow and superficial; without comprehending the meaning of Christ's words, they yet saw in them the offer of something desirable, they knew not what, and asked for it.—*Abbott*. They do not disbelieve in his power, but in his mission.—*Plummer*.

35, 36, 37. **I am the bread of life**—"Bread of life" means "bread that giveth life." Comp. "the tree of life" (Gen. 2. 9; 3. 22, 24), "the water of life." Rev. 21. 6; 22. 1. In the remainder of the verse "He that cometh to me"—"he that believeth on me," and "shall never hunger"—"shall never thirst;" that is, the believer shall experience the continual satisfaction of his highest spiritual needs. The superiority of Christ to the manna consists in this, that while it satisfied only bodily needs for a time, he satisfies spiritual needs forever.—*Plummer*. **He that cometh**—The coming is a continuous coming; a coming into Christ's likeness, and therefore into spiritual unity with him; a coming perfected only by the process of feeding upon him, drinking in his spiritual power so as to be transformed by it. It is the coming which David describes in Psa. 68. 8, "My soul followeth hard after thee," and Paul in Phil. 3. 13, 14, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Comp. with the promise here Matt. 5. 6; Rev. 7. 16. All spiritual hunger and thirst are not ended when Christian experience begins, because in this life we are ever coming toward Christ, we have never come fully unto him. This coming is consummated when we are one with Christ as he is one with the

Authorized Version.

come to me; and ⁹him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

38 For I came down from heaven, ⁹not to do mine own will, but ¹⁰the will of him that sent me.

39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, ¹¹that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that ¹²every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Revised Version.

shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but

the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth the Son, should have eternal life; and ¹I will raise him up at the last day.

⁹ Job 8. 2; Jer. 21. 25; 23. 25, 26; Matt. 24. 24; chap. 10. 28, 29; 2 Tim. 2. 19; 1 John 2. 19.—¹⁰ Matt. 26. 29; chap. 6. 30. ¹¹ Luke 9. 42; chap. 4. 34; 5. 20; 17. 24.—¹² Chap. 5. 24; 10. 29; 17. 12, 13; 18. 9; 20. 31; Col. 3. 2; Jude 1.—¹³ Chap. 4. 14.

⁹ Or, that I should raise him up.

Father (John 17. 21, 22); the promise of the Gospel is then fulfilled in the glorious satisfaction of a perfected redemption. 1 John 3. 2; Psa. 17. 15. We are not satisfied till we awake in his likeness. —*Abbott.* Believe not—They were fixedly sordid in their views; seeking a feeder for their stomachs, not a Saviour for their souls.—*Whedon.* This verse should read: "*All that the Father giveth me, to me shall come, and him that approacheth me I will in no wise cast out; for I have descended,*" etc.—*Rummer.*

Christ's promise to cast out none is the sinner's warrant. It includes every case. To such a rule of mercy there can be no exception. The outcasts of Palestine were welcomed and blessed by the Master, and the worst sinner in our community will be equally welcome.

38, 39, 40.—I came down—Better, *I am come* down, or have descended. Four times in this discourse Christ declares that he is come down from heaven, vers. 38, 50, 51, 58. The drift of these three verses (38-40) is: How could I cast them out, seeing that I am come to do my Father's will, and he wills that they should be received?—*Cambridge Bible.* I should lose nothing—There will be no erratic self-will in Christ, darting off from the divine plan; no remissness, no oversight, no failure. All who perseveringly believe in him he will as faithfully and powerfully save as the will of the Father can require.—*Whedon.* Seeth—Contemplet. Believeth on him—So long as he performs the condition, so long is he heir of the salvation. When he ceases to be a believer he loses all claim to the divine promise and all interest in eternal life. That he has once believed no longer secures him heaven, any more than the fact that he has once disbelieved secures eternal death.—*Whedon.* May have eternal life: and I will raise him up—These words clearly imply (1) That there is nothing in any secret decree or election of God, or in the nature or extent of the provisions of divine grace, to limit the gift of eternal life or prevent any one from receiving it through faith in the Son; (2) that the only condition required is one inherent in the nature of the case, namely, a sincere belief in and desire for that spiritual life which alone is eternal and of which Christ is the supreme manifestation; (3) that whoever has once thus looked to Christ with living faith has an absolute assurance of preservation from the weakness of his own will as well as from external temptation, an assurance afforded by Christ's declaration, "Of all which he has given me I shall lose nothing."—*Abbott.*

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Spiritual ignorance causes men to miss the higher values. Ver. 26. Nelson, the English admiral, died in great spiritual ignorance. He had renounced his amiable and unoffending consort and attached himself to another man's wife, yet his moral sense was so blinded that his last words were, "Doctor, I have not been a great sinner. Thank God, I have done my duty."

A gardener once asked permission of his master to sleep in the stable. "There is no possibility," said he, "of sleeping in the chamber behind the greenhouse, for the nightingales there do nothing but gurgle and keep up a noise all night." So the sweetest melody of the Gospel has no charm for some ears.

The world passeth away. Ver. 27. Queen Elizabeth once said to a courtier, "They pass best over the world who trip over it quickly; for it is but a bog—if we stop, we sink."

The traveler in the Arabian desert often sees a wonderful sight. A fair landscape, or a noble castle, or a great city seems suddenly to rise out of the sand before his eyes, and then having lasted for half an hour to pass utterly away. The mists exhaling from the heated sand produced this wonderful vision. It is a splendid delusion; while he is admiring it it is gone. So the world departs, leaving the poor soul that trusted in it without a home and without a hope.

Napoleon I. was visiting the picture gallery of the Louvre in Paris. He expressed his admiration for a remarkable picture to one of his generals. "Yes," said the general, "it is immortal." "Immortal!" said Napoleon; "how long will it last?" "Three or four hundred years," was the reply. Then, pointing to a statue, he asked, "How long will that last?" "Three or four thousand years," was the answer. "*You call that immortality!*" said the emperor.

We ought to live for the important things. Ver. 27. Over the triple door-ways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses and underneath is the legend, "All that which *pleases* is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "All that which *troubles* us is but for a moment." But underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "*That only is important which is eternal.*" If we realize the latter, we will not live for the passing pageants of the hour.—*Christian Age*.

Christ is the only way to heaven. Ver. 27. Many will say, "I can reach the goal without coming by Christ." Very well. Do so if you can. The ferry company would feel no jealousy of a man who should prefer to swim to New York. Let him do so, if he is able, and we will talk about it on the other shore; but probably trying to swim would be the thing that would bring him quickest to the boat. Christ has given us the earth for our body, but he himself is the soil in which our souls must root; the eternal help, the source of succor and all supply.—*Boscher*.

When the immense stone piers of the East River Bridge were begun some years ago the builders did not attempt to manufacture a foundation. They simply dug down through the mud and sand to the solid bed-rock which the almighty Creator had laid there thousands of years ago. It is a wretched mistake to suppose that you need to construct a foundation. "Other foundation can no man lay than *that is laid*, which is in Jesus Christ." Your own purity will no more answer for a solid base than would a cart-load of bricks as the substratum of yonder stupendous bridge.—*Dr. Cuyler*.

Faith in Christ, and not human merit, saves.—Vers. 28, 29. 'Twas an unhappy division that has been made between faith and works. Though in my intellect I may divide them—just as in the candle I know there is both light and heat, but yet put out the candle and they are both gone; one remains not without the other; so is it betwixt faith and works. In a right conception, if I believe a thing because I am commanded faith is *work*.—*Selden*.

Guthrie tells us that when Knox was dying he had a great struggle. For it was suggested to the old lion-hearted champion who had bearded proud nobles and princes, and had preached on though a musket was leveled at his head, that he had done so much he had purchased the crown of life. He fought in agony the livelong night to conquer himself and honor Jesus only. Then he emerged, saying, "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done,*" etc.

TEACHING HINTS.

From the field near Bethsaida we are taken over the storm-tossed sea on which the Saviour walked to the synagogue at Capernaum. Here, on the day after feeding the five thousand, Jesus showed to the Jews the spiritual meaning of the miracle. The theme of our lesson is the *Bread of Life*.

1. It is neglected bread. Ver. 26. It was not hunger for the bread of life which brought

the multitudes to the synagogue. They came expecting another miracle, hoping to be fed again with loaves and fishes. The physical appetites and material desires blind men to the deeper, more real needs of their spiritual nature.

2. **It is needed bread.** Ver. 27. Though people realize their need of "the meat which perisheth," and labor for it, they need far more the bread of heaven, the supply for their spiritual nature. It is better, if one must take his choice, to let his body starve than his soul. Let our highest endeavor be after the meat that endures to everlasting life.

3. **It is bread from God.** Vers. 28-32. For many centuries the source of the Nile was the world's mystery. The river turned the desert to a garden, and gave bread to men, but no man knew its origin or could explain its overflow. We know now where are the mighty lakes from which it pours forth. Whence flows the stream of salvation? "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." 2 Cor. 9. 15.

4. **It is bread partaken by faith.** Ver. 29. To have faith in Christ is to come into living union with him, accepting his salvation, submitting fully to his will. He who does this partakes of the bread of life. Our hunger is not satisfied by reading about a banquet, nor by looking at a bountiful table; but by taking it into ourselves. So is it when we by faith receive an appropriate Christ.

5. **It is satisfying bread.** Vers. 33-35. Few changes in this world satisfy their possessors. Men obtain property, fame, success, power, but their hearts are hungry still, like King Midas, whose touch turned every thing to gold while he was starving. But the bread of life gives to the soul complete content, for it is the soul's perfect food.

6. **It is abundant bread.** Vers. 36, 37. Not all *do* partake of the bread of life, but all *may*. The Father's plan embraces all mankind. The Son died for all. None are shut out from the table. If any are hungering it is because they will not come.

7. **It is life-giving bread.** Vers. 38-40. In the garden of Eden stood a tree of life. That tree is growing still in Jesus Christ. Whosoever eats of its fruit shall live forever. He may seem to die, but he has eternal life, and death has no dominion over him. He shall rise at the last day and shall ascend to his everlasting habitation.

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1. **TO SPECIAL SUBJECTS.**—"Manna to be brought down from Heaven by the Messiah," EDERSHEIM, i, 176, 177. "The Great Crisis in Popular Feeling," EDERSHEIM, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, ii, 25. "The Bread from Heaven," EDERSHEIM, ii, 31. "Bread of Heaven," FARRAR, *The Life of Christ*, i, 414-417. "Inherit Eternal Life," FARRAR, ii, 159. "Sealing," BURDEN, *Oriental Customs*, 1120. "Sealed as a Sacrifice," *Things not Generally Known*, 332. "Selection of Sacrifices by Sealing," TUCK, *Hand-book of Biblical Difficulties*, 355.

2. **TO SERMONS AND ADDRESSES.**—*Spiritual Interest Real and Supreme*, O. DEWEY. *Faith the Sole Saving Act*, W. G. SHEDD. *The Reason of Faith*, H. BUSHNELL. *Human Inability*, SPURGEON, iv. *Christ Sealed by the Father*, R. WATSON, ii, 43. *The Lord's Supper*, J. McL. CAMPBELL. *Justification by Faith*, T. ARNOLD, ii, 266. *The Meat of the New Man*, JUKES.

LESSON IX.—August 30.

CHRIST AT THE FEAST.—JOHN 7. 31-44.

GOLDEN TEXT.—If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.—John 7. 37.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

PLACE.—The temple courts.

ENVIRONMENTS OF THIS LESSON.—The last, the great day of the feast was observed with much festivity. The pilgrims, with willow and palm branches in their hands, divided into three great bands, and marched, some to the great altar, which they decorated with a leafy canopy, some to the "Pool of Siloam" from which they filled a golden pitcher. This, with the wine of the drink-offering, was with much ceremony poured forth at the great altar of burnt-offering. It was one of the grandest ceremonials of the entire Jewish ritual. The forthpouring of the water was immediately followed by the responsive chanting of the great "hallel," consisting of Psa. 118-118. After that there must have been a short pause to prepare for the festive sacrifices. It was then, immediately after the symbolic rite of water-pouring, immediately after the people had responded by repeating lines from Psa. 118, given thanks, and prayed that Jehovah would send salvation and prosperity, and had shaken their *palm branches* toward the altar, thus praising "with heart, and mouth, and hands," and then silence had fallen upon them—that there rose, so loud as to be heard throughout the temple, the voice of Jesus. He interrupted not the services, for they had for the moment ceased; he interpreted, and he fulfilled them.—*Condensed from Edersheim.*

Authorized Version.

31 And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

33 The Phar'i-sees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Phar'i-sees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

Revised Version.

31 But of the multitude many believed on him; and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done? The Phar'i-sees heard the multitude murmuring these things concerning him; and the chief priests and the Phar'i-sees sent officers to

I. THE PEOPLE'S QUESTIONS. Verses 31-36.

31, 32. And many of the people believed—"And" should be "but;" that is, in contrast to the rulers of the multitude. *Heard*—Evidently certain by-standers who had not the nerve to apprehend Jesus had the spirit to carry the news of his preaching and its effects to these Pharisees. —*Whedon.* Note that in this proposed arrest the reckless hierarchy, who were mainly Sadducees, combine with their enemies the Pharisees. Comp. 5. 45; 11. 47; 57, 18. 3.—*Cambridge Bible.* The Pharisees and the chief priests—This was an official act on the part of the Sanhedrin, carrying out the design of certain of the people, as indicated in verse 30; and it is the first official endeavor to arrest him, the beginning of a course of action consummated in his final arrest, trial, and crucifixion.—*Abbott.* Sent officers—The failure of these officers is given in their report. Ver. 46. Our evangelist gives this account parenthetically, and then proceeds with his narrative of the struggle of Jesus with the crowd.—*Whedon.*

From envy, hatred, and malice, good Lord, deliver us. See ILLUSTRATIONS. The best natured of us are tempted at times to these evil tempers; and no temper brings forth more odious sins than these.

33, 34. Notice that a break evidently occurs between verses 31 and 32. The discourse up to verse 31 is continuous, and took place about the middle of the feast, that is, the third or fourth day; the discourse in verses 37-39 was on the last day of the feast; between the two the orders for Christ's arrest were given. Verses 33, 34, are founded on Christ's knowledge of those orders, and

Authorized Version.

33 Then said Je'sus unto them, Yet 'a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye 'shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto 'the dispersed among the 'Gen'tiles, and teach the Gen'tiles?

36 What *manner* of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come?

37 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Je'sus stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He 'that believeth on me, as the

Revised Version.

33 take him. Je'sus therefore said, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go

34 unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and

35 where I am, ye cannot come. The Jews therefore said among themselves, Whither will this man go that we shall not find him? will he go unto the Dispersion, 'among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What is this word that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ye cannot come?

37 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Je'sus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the

1 Chap. 12. 22.—2 Hec. 5. 6; chap. 6. 51; 12. 23.—3 Isa. 11. 19; Jer. 1. 1; 1 Pet. 1. 1.—4 Or, Greeks.—5 Isa. 55. 1; Rev. 2. 30; 22. 17.—6 Deut. 18. 18.

1 Gr. *cf.*

it is a reasonable surmise that the presence of the officers suggested it to him and interpreted its meaning to some at least of his auditors. Yet a little while am I with you—About six months after this address he was crucified. And then I go unto him that sent me—With this explicit statement of his meaning, interpreted as it was by the previous declaration that it was the true God who had sent him, it is difficult to understand how the Jews could have been perplexed respecting his meaning. I believe that Christ was explicit, that he was understood, and that the assumed perplexity of his hearers was a piece of hypocrisy.—*Abbott.*

We should make good use of time while it is ours. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Even our divine Master was pressed by the brevity of time.

35, 36. Then said the Jews among themselves—Their utterance has been by some regarded as the utterance of a genuine perplexity; but probably it should be regarded as the language of scorn and contempt.—*Abbott.* The dispersed or, *the dispersion*, meaning those Jews who were dispersed among the heathen outside Palestine; the abstract for the concrete, like "the circumcision" for the Jews generally. There were three chief colonies of these "dispersed" or "scattered" Jews, in Babylonia, Egypt, and Syria, whence they spread over the whole world.—*Cambridge Bible.*

II. THE SAVIOUR'S PROMISE. Verses 37-39.

37, 38. The last of the feast, known as "the Hosanna Rabba" and the "Great Day," found him, as each day before doubtless had done, in the temple arcades. It was burning autumn weather, when the sun had for months shone in a cloudless sky, and the early rains were longed for as the monsoons in India after the summer heat. Water at all times is a magic word in a sultry climate like Palestine, but at this moment it had a double power. Standing, therefore, to give his words more solemnity, his voice now sounded far and near over the throng, with soft clearness which arrested all. If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.—*Geikie.* If one can imagine these words spoken while the procession is marching into the temple, or just after the solemn service is over and the minds of the people are still full of it, he will form a faint conception of the divine assumption implied in them; and if he further considers the effect produced, both on the multitude (vers. 40, 41) and on the officers sent to arrest Jesus (ver. 46), he will form a faint conception of the divine dignity with which those words were uttered. He that believeth—*He that hath faith.*—*Abbott.* As the Scripture hath said—There is no passage in

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
Scripture hath said, 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.	Scripture hath said, out of his belly
39 (But 'this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Je'sus was not yet glorified.)	39 shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: ² for the Spirit was not yet given; because Je'sus was not yet glorified. <i>Some</i> of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Gal'i-lee?
40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is 'the Prophet.	40 shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: ² for the Spirit was not yet given; because Je'sus was not yet glorified. <i>Some</i> of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Gal'i-lee?
41 Others said, "This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Gal'i-lee?	41 Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of Da'vid, and
42 Hath "not the Scripture said. That Christ cometh of the seed of Da'vid, and	42 Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of Da'vid,

¹ Isa. 12. 3. — ² Isa. 44. 3; Joel 2. 28; char. 16. 7; Acts 2. 17. — ³ Chap. 12. 14. — ⁴ Deut. 18. 15; chap. 1. 21; 5. 14. — ⁵ Chap. 4. 42. — ⁶ 1 Pet. 122. 11; Luke 2. 4.

⁷ Some ancient authorities read *for the Holy Spirit was not yet given.*

the Old Testament which directly sustains this citation, and no reason to suppose that Christ refers to any 10-t book. The meaning is simply that the whole divine revelation points to Christ and the Holy Ghost. Isa. 12. 3; 44. 3; 55. 1; 59. 11; Joel 3. 18; Zech. 13. 1; 14. 8. **Shall flow rivers**—The water which he drinks becomes in him a spring from which living waters flow, as the light which illuminates him makes him in turn one of the lights which illuminate the world. Matt. 5. 14; Phil. 2. 15.—*Abbott.*

The best way of coming to Jesus is just as we are, and now. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Ver. 37.

If any man thirst. Here is no unconditional promise. It is conditioned, not merely on desire, but on a fervent desire. Comp. Isa. 55. 1; Matt. 5. 6; Rev. 22. 17. "None are called to obtain the riches of the Spirit but those who burn with the desire of them. For we know that the pain of thirst is most acute and tormenting, so that the very strongest men, and those who can endure any amount of toil, are overpowered by thirst."—*Calvin.* Some of your class may be spiritually athirst to-day.

Christians may have mighty influence for good. The mutual and inspired intercourse of Christians from Pentecost downward, the speaking in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, the mutual edification in Christian assemblies, the ~~an~~ ^{an} ~~tr~~ ^{tr} ~~act~~ ^{act} ~~o~~ ^o ~~f~~ ^f ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~ap~~ ^{ap} ~~ost~~ ^{ost} ~~les~~ ^{les} of Stephen and so on, furnish appear as God's representative. So came Christ as the messenger of God to the world.

6. Christ the Anointed King. Vers. 41-44. Call attention to the fact that the word "Christ" in Greek and "Messiah" in Hebrew both mean "the anointed one." "The Lord's anointed" in the Old Testament was the title of the king. "Messiah the prince" is the prophetic title of the Saviour. Christ, then, is the King in the kingdom of God. Let him have our loyal obedience.

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1. TO SPECIAL SUBJECTS.—"Ceremonies at the Feast of Tabernacles," FREEMAN, *Hand-book of Bible Manners and Customs*, 425. "Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles," FARRAR, *The Life of Christ*, ii, 47-52; ANDREWS, 179, 331-333. "Great Day of the Feast," FARRAR, ii, 56; EDERHEIM, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, ii, 156. "Descent of Christ from David," FARRAR, i, 9. "Pharisees," SCHURER, ii, 1-5, 12-17, 25. "Dispersed among the Gentiles," SCHURER, ii, 120, 281. "Position of Judaism with References to Heathenism," SCHURER, i, 51; ii, 296.

2. TO SERMONS AND ADDRESSES.—*Various Opinions*, H. MELVILLE, ii, 170. *The Liberty of the New Man*, JUKES, i, 111. *Feast of the Tabernacles*, EDERHEIM, in *The Temple*, *its Plans and Cried*, W. ARNOT. *The Fountain of Life*, J. M. MASON. *Indwelling of the Spirit* that Jesus was born in Bethlehem—~~the~~ ^{the} ~~Christ~~ ^{Christ} ~~gospel~~ ^{gospel} ~~study~~ ^{study} ~~year~~ ^{year} ~~book~~ ^{book} ~~acts~~ ^{acts} of Christ's birth, life, and death were known throughout the Church, he here simply narrates as a historian the objections which the Jews made to the claim that Jesus was the Messiah; to have pointed out their mistake would have been a work of supererogation.—*Abbott.* Of the seed of David—

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
out of the town of Beth'le-hem, "where Da'vid was?	and from Beth'le-hem, the village
43 So there was a division among the people because of him.	43 where Da'vid was? So there arose a division in the multitude because of
44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.	44 him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

101 Sam. 16. 1.

Psa. 132. 11; Jer. 23. 5; Isa. 11. 1, 10. Out of the town of Bethlehem—Literally, from *Beth-lehem, the village* where David was. Mic. 5. 2; 1 Sam. 16. A division—It means a serious and possibly violent division (9. 16; 10. 19; 1 Cor. 1. 10; 12. 25. Comp. Acts 14. 4; 28. 7). Among the people—In the multitude. Some of them—Some of the multitude, provoked by the controversy, would on their own responsibility have carried him before the Sanhedrin. These "some" are not the officers mentioned in the next verse.—*Cambridge Bible*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

From envy, hatred, and malice, Good Lord, deliver us! Ver. 32.—At a small literary gathering at which *Thomas Carlyle* was present, a lady was bewailing the wickedness of the Jews in their treatment of Jesus, and expressed regret that he had not appeared in our own time. "How delighted we should all be to throw open our doors to him and listen to his divine precepts! Don't you think so, Mr. Carlyle?" He replied, "No, madam, I don't. I think that had he come fashionably dressed, with plenty of money, and preaching doctrines palatable to the higher orders, I might have had the honor of receiving from you a card of invitation, on the back of which would be written, 'To meet our Saviour;' but if he had come denouncing the Pharisees and associating with the lower orders *you would have treated him much as the Jews did*, and have cried out, 'Take him to Newgate and hang him.'"

The late Dr. Waugh, of London, being once present in a company of forty gentlemen when a young man, who was a student for the ministry, was entertaining those around him with ungenerous strictures upon a popular preacher of the day, he looked at him until he arrested his attention, then remarked, "My friend, there is a saying in a good old book which I recommend to your reflection: 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'"

35, 36. Then said the Jews among themselves—Their utterance has been by some regarded as the utterance of a genuine perplexity; but probably it should be regarded as the language of scorn and contempt.—*Abbott*. The dispersed or, the dispersion, meaning those Jews who were dispersed among the heathen outside Palestine; the abstract for the concrete, like "the circumcision" for the Jews generally. There were three chief colonies of these "dispersed" or "scattered" Jews, in Babylonia, Egypt, and Syria, whence they spread over the whole world.—*Cambridge Bible*.

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"My next step," said a seeker, "is to get deeper conviction." "No," said a Christian friend, "your next step, and only step, is to go to Christ just as you are. He does not say, Come to conviction, Come to a deeper sense of sin, but 'Come unto me.'" The snare was broken.

TEACHING HINTS.

Six months in the life of Christ have intervened since the events of the last lesson, between the feast of passover and the feast of tabernacles. After visits to Phenicia, to Decapolis, to Mt. Hermon, to Capernaum, Jesus is once more in Jerusalem. A brief outline might be given of the events in this interval.

We find here Christ presented in various aspects, each of which may afford a theme for teaching.

1. **Christ the Worker of Miracles.** Ver. 31. Show why the miracles of Jesus were wrought: 1.) To prove his mission as divine in its authority. 2.) As the result of his deep sympathy with human trouble. Having power, he relieved where men could only give sympathy. 3.) To illustrate the principles of salvation; for example, heavenly bread by the five loaves, spiritual sight by physical, etc. He works greater miracles now in the salvation of souls, a higher work than the healing of bodies.

2. **Christ the Heavenly Being.** Ver. 32-36. The earthly career of Jesus was only an incident in his existence. He came down from heaven, and he here tells the Jews that soon he shall return to heaven. It is noticeable that John's gospel, which has no account of the ascension of Christ, contains more references to the ascension than any other book in the New Testament. He went to heaven and to God because his affinities were all there. His nature drew heavenward like the magnet toward the pole. His enemies could not go thither (ver. 34) because they belonged to earth and not to heaven. Where is your home, to which your nature belongs?

3. **Christ the Water of Life.** Ver. 37, 38. Call attention to the peculiar services on the "last day of the feast," the pouring of water, etc. Notice the progression in the words of Jesus: 1.) "Thirst." 2.) "Come." 3.) "Drink." 4.) "Flow," or give to others.

4. **Christ the Giver of the Spirit.** Ver. 38, 39. Those who drink at this fountain receive a divine endowment, and become in turn wells of water to their fellow-men. There is a Persian legend of a spring whose water, wherever dropped on the ground, would cause another spring to bubble up. So is he who drinks from Christ.

5. **Christ the Prophet of God.** Ver. 40. Not merely "a prophet," as one in the goodly fellowship of Samuel and Isaiah and Daniel, but "the Prophet," the one foretold by Moses to appear as God's representative. So came Christ as the messenger of God to the world.

6. **Christ the Anointed King.** Ver. 41-44. Call attention to the fact that the word "Christ" in Greek and "Messiah" in Hebrew both mean "the anointed one." "The Lord's anointed" in the Old Testament was the title of the king. "Messiah the prince" is the prophetic title of the Saviour. Christ, then, is the King in the kingdom of God. Let him have our loyal obedience.

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LESSON X.—September 6.

THE TRUE CHILDREN OF GOD.—JOHN 8. 31-47.

GOLDEN TEXT.—As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.—John 1. 12.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

CONNECTING LINKS.—When the officers who had been ordered to arrest Jesus returned to the Sanhedrin, their only response to the demand, "Why have ye not brought him?" was, "Never man spake like this man." This led to an indignant discussion, in which Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus by night, spoke in behalf of our Lord. After silencing him, as they thought, the leaders of the Pharisees dispersed. During the feast of the tabernacles, which had just been held, the "court of the women," in the temple inclosure, was night by night brilliantly illuminated. When the feast was over the lights were put out; and with this probably for his text Jesus said (John 8. 12), "I am the Light of the world." The Pharisees interrupted him frequently as he continued to discourse of the Father, the evidence of his own high mission, and his coming fate. His wonderful teachings led many to believe on him. To them especially he uttered the words of our lesson.

Authorized Version.

31 Then said Je'sus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and ¹ the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, ² We be A'braham's seed, and were never in bondage

Revised Version.

31 Je'sus therefore said to those Jews which had believed him, If ye abide in my word, *then* are ye truly my

32 disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you

33 free. They answered unto him, We be A'bra-ham's seed, and have never

¹ Rom. 6. 14; 8. 2; Jas. 1. 25; 2. 12.—² Lev. 25. 47; Matt. 2. 6.

I. ABRAHAM'S SEED. Verses 31-39.

31, 32. If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed—A promise and a condition. The thing promised is discipleship. They should be—what? Saints! divine! doctors! No; but what is much better than any of the three—what all the three should wish to be raised into—*disciples*. They should be learners, sitting continually at the feet of the true Teacher.—*Maurice*. Christ would warn his new converts not to mistake a momentary impulse for a deliberate conviction.—*Sanday*. Ye shall know the truth—Living according to the word of Christ is the condition precedent to a true apprehension of the truth.—*Abbott*.

To attain to eminence we must persevere. See ILLUSTRATIONS. If you succeed in fixing this truth firmly in the minds of the youth you teach, you have gone far toward making them successful in both worlds. But to *continue* in Christ's word means something more than mere perseverance.

On the word "*continue*." The Lord's promise to his followers is not that they shall be learned, acquiring the truth once for all, but learners, ever acquiring it more and more. This promise is conditioned on—what? Receiving his word? defending his word? No; but continuing, that is, abiding, in his word; that is, living, moving, and having their being in it. The word of Christ cannot be accepted once for all; the soul to be nourished on it must abide in it, as the body abides in and is nourished by the atmosphere. Comp. chaps. 5. 38; 6. 56; 15. 4-10; 1 John 2. 6, 10, 14, etc.; 3. 6. To be Christ's disciples indeed we must *continue* (Matt. 13. 20, 21; John 6. 66; Col. 1. 23; Heb. 10. 38; Rev. 2. 7-11, 17) in (John 15. 1-7; Rom. 8. 9; Gal. 1. 30; Col. 1. 27) the word of Christ (Matt. 11. 22, 30; 1 Cor. 3. 11; Gal. 1. 8).—*Abbott*.

33. We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage—On texts like Gen. 17. 16 and 22. 17 they build the proud belief that Jews have never yet been in bondage to any man. But

Authorized Version.

to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Je'sus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And 'the servant abideth not in the house forever: *but* the Son abideth ever.

36 If 'the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

37 I know that ye are A'bra-ham's seed; but ye 'seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

Revised Version.

yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Je'sus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of 35 sin. And the bond-servant abideth not in the house forever: the son

36 abideth forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free

37 indeed. I know that ye are A'bra-ham's seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word 'hath not free course in you. I speak the things which I have seen with 'my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard

¹ 2 Pet. 2. 19. — ² Gal. 4. 30. — ³ Isa. 49. 24; Rom. 8. 2; 2 Cor. 2. 11; Gal. 5. 1; Rev. 1. 5; 2. 7, 10; 5. 2. — ⁴ Chap. 7. 19.

¹ Or, hath no place in you. — ² Or, the Father; do ye also there- fore the things which I heard from the Father.

passion blinds them to historical facts. The power which the human mind possesses of keeping inconvenient facts out of sight is very considerable. Here is another instance of gross inability to perceive the spiritual meaning of Christ's words. Comp. 3. 4; 4. 34.—*Plummer*.

34, 35, 36. Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.—The sinner is sin's slave. The servant abideth not . . . but the Son abideth—That is, no slave is at home in his master's mansion, but the son abideth forever. He is the heir. As if he had said: Satan claims this world as his house, but it is really God's. Whoever sins is Satan's *slave*; but I and my disciples are God's *sons*. Ye shall be free indeed—Freedom is not independence of all law—that never is and never can be; it is the comprehension and the right use of law. We are free when we perfectly comprehend the laws of nature—that is, of God; perfectly and cheerfully comply with them, and so know how to get the advantage and profit of them. All progress in material civilization has been attained by increasing knowledge of the divine laws, and consequently an increased use of them. We have yet to learn the gain that there is in a similar comprehension of, and obedience to, the intellectual and the spiritual laws of the universe. Thus it is that the *truth* makes *free*. Ver. 32. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, especially chapters 4 and 5, may be regarded as his sermon on these texts.—*Abbott*.

Sin is a tyrant. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Action forms habit, and habit becomes second nature. Every sinful act tends to bring the soul into bondage to the law of evil habit. Striking illustrations of this law of human nature are afforded by self-indulgence in appetite; but the same principle is involved in all evil-doing—it tends to fasten evil habits on the soul. See Rom. 6. 16-18; 7. 9-24. And this law belongs to human nature; it is equally operative in Jew and Gentile, in church member and in man of the world. Every sin helps to weld a chain." Make a direct personal appeal to your scholars to avoid sin. And there is only one way by which it can be avoided.

There is grace in Christ sufficient for us. See ILLUSTRATIONS. No habit so strong, no moral nature so weak, as to be beyond his reach. Adequate provision has been made for the salvation of the weakest and the worst.

37, 38. I know that ye are Abraham's seed—His natural descendants. Comp. Rom. 9. 8. Also, heirs to God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12. 1-3; 17. 4-3) to protect and bless the nation. Christ assents to the Pharisees' declaration, but returns to the spiritual idea which underlies his discourse, and emphasizes the extent to which, in character, they have wandered from the pattern set by Abraham. My word hath no place in you.—It "makes no progress in you." They crowded round him to hear it, were willing and interested listeners. But the truth did not get entrance into their hearts nor permeate their character. It was not like the leaven hid in three measures of meal. They were thus a type of many modern hearers who listen to the truth, but in whom the truth does not work.—*Abbott*. The connection of verse 38 with verse 37 is not quite obvious. Perhaps it is this: My words make no progress in you because they are so different in origin and nature from your acts, especially your attempt to kill me.—*Plummer*.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
39 They answered and said unto him, A'bra-ham 'is our father. Je'sus saith unto them, 'If ye were A'bra-ham's children, ye would do the works of A'bra-ham.	39 from <i>your</i> father. They answered and said unto him, Our father is A'bra-ham. Je'sus saith unto them, If ye 'were A'bra-ham's children, 'ye would do the works of A'bra-ham.
40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not A'bra-ham.	40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not A'bra-
41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; 'we have one Father, <i>even</i> God.	41 ham. Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have
42 Je'sus said unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: 'for I proceeded forth and came from God; 'neither came I of myself, but he sent me.	42 one Father, <i>even</i> God. Je'sus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent
43 Why "do ye not understand my speech? <i>even</i> because ye cannot hear my word.	43 me. Why do ye not 'understand my speech? <i>Even</i> because ye cannot hear

¹ Matt. 2. 2. — ² Rom. 2. 23; 9. 1; Gal. 2. 7, 22. — ³ Isa. 63. 16; 64. 8; Mal. 1. 6. — ⁴ John 4. 19; 5. 1. — ⁵ Chap. 1. 14; 2. 16; 16. 27; 17. 8; Gal. 4. 4. — ⁶ Chap. 5. 45. — ⁷ Chap. 7. 17.

⁸ Gr. are. — ⁹ Some ancient authorities read *ye do the works of Abraham*. — ¹⁰ Or, know.

39. Abraham is our father.—See ver. 44. If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham—Seed they are, children they are not. Descendants! yes! disciples? no! They do not do that which they have heard from Abraham. Americans are the children of a noble ancestry, the reformers, the Puritans, and the like, only as we show their spirit in dealing with the men and the problems of our time.—Abbott.

II. SATAN'S SEED. Verses 40-47.

40, 41. This did not Abraham—Abraham obeyed the divine message; the seed of Abraham would kill the divine messenger.—Abbott. What could there be in common between "the friend of God" (Jas. 2. 23) and the enemies of God's Son.—Plummer. Ye do the deeds of your father—A generic truth; the spiritual paternity of any soul may be known by its deeds; the source of its life is witnessed by the life itself.—Abbott. We have one father—Here they drop literal parentage and adopt his figurative language. "You are speaking of spiritual parentage. Well, our spiritual Father is God." Idolatry is so constantly spoken of as whoredom and fornication throughout the whole of the Old Testament, that in a discussion about spiritual fatherhood this image would be perfectly natural in the mouth of a Jew. Exod. 34. 15, 16; Lev. 17. 7; Judg. 2. 17; 2 Kings 9. 22; Psa. 78. 27; Isa. 1. 21; Jer. 3. 1, 9; Ezek. 16. 15, etc. See especially Hos. 2. 4.—Plummer.

42. If God were your Father, ye would love me—The practical and present application is that every soul whose life is truly rooted in God will be drawn toward Christ by spiritual sympathy. Comp. 15. 23 and 1 John 5. 1.—Abbott. On the contrary, ye seek to commit murder, and a murder of the most heinous kind. Ye would kill One who hath spoken unto you the truth, truth which he learnt from God.—Plummer.

43. Why do ye not understand my speech—He has thus far spoken parabolically, as though reluctant to characterize them openly as children of the devil. He now abandons the dark saying, and speaks plainly. Even because ye cannot hear my word—Word is the doctrine taught, speech is the form in which it is clothed; to hear is to receive with the heart, as in Matt. 13. 16, 20; John 5. 24; 8. 47, etc., to understand is to comprehend intellectually. The implication, then, is that he who is unwilling to receive and act upon the doctrine of Christ in his heart and life cannot comprehend the forms in which it is couched. The declaration is thus the converse of chapter 7. 17.—Abbott.

Authorized Version.

44 Ye ¹⁴are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and ¹⁵abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

45 And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

47 He ¹⁶that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

Revised Version.

44 my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and ¹⁵stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. ¹⁷When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is

45 a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not

47 believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

¹⁴ Matt. 12. 25.—¹⁵ Gen. 2. 1; 2 Cor. 11. 2; Jude 4.—¹⁶ 1 John 4. 5.

¹⁷ Some ancient authorities read *standeth*.—¹⁸ Or, *When one speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for his father also is a liar.*

44. Ye are of your father the devil—This whole contrast would be almost meaningless if by the devil Christ understood only a poetic personification of evil in human nature.—*Abbott*. This verse is one of the most decisive testimonies for the objective personality of the devil. It is quite impossible to suppose an accommodation of Jewish views, or a metaphorical form of speech, in so solemn and direct an assertion as this.—*Alford*. Compare Matt. 23. 13-36.

Slavers carry out the designs of Satan. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

45. But because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not—A thoroughly tragical *because*; it has its ground in the alien character of the relation between that which Jesus speaks and their devilish nature, to which latter a lie alone corresponds.—*Meyer*. If Christ had told a lie they would have believed him, just as many of those who now rejected him did subsequently believe the false Christs of a later date.—*Abbott*. Comp. Rom. 1. 21; Eph. 4. 18; 2 Thess. 2. 11. Men in love with sin hate truth. Human nature is easily warped.

46. Which of you convinceth me of sin—Not of *error* (*Calvin*), but of *sin* (*Alford*, *Godet*, *Meyer*). Indeed, *error* in Christ's teaching in this matter would be *sin*; he defies his opponents to point out a single sin in his life, a single flaw in his character. And they were speechless, as skepticism has been ever since, before his incomparable character. The argument is this: If I am not the Son of God, find out some human defect that indicates a human origin and kinship. And this has never been done. I imagine a pause, a moment's expressive silence, no answer from the Pharisees, and then the crushing words that follow, calmly uttered: *If I say the truth, why do ye not believe? He that is of God—as the Pharisees had claimed to be (ver. 41) heareth (receiveth) God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.* This is Christ's method with deists.—*Abbott*. There is the majesty of divinity in the challenge. What mortal man would dare to make it? Comp. 14. 30; 15. 10; 1 John 3. 5; 1 Pet. 1. 19; 2. 22.—*Pummer*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

To attain to eminence we must persevere. Ver. 31.—A poor woman, had a supply of coal laid at her door by a charitable neighbor. A very little girl came out with a small fire-shovel, and began to take up a shovelful at a time and carry it to the cellar. I said to the child, "Do you expect to get all that coal in with that little shovel?" She replied, "Yes, sir, if I only work long enough." The repetition of small efforts will always effect more than the occasional use of great talents.—*Spurgeon*.

Like raising heavy weights, all the labor is lost if it be not kept up to the end. The only failure a man ought to fear is failure in cleaving to the purpose he sees to be the best.—*George Eliot*.

Every sinner is slave to a tyrant. Ver. 34.—*Vitellius*, who had been emperor of all

the world, was driven naked through Rome and thrown into the Tiber; Andronicus for his cruelty was deposed and hanged head downward. Ptolemy was put on a cross, Bajazet in an iron cage, Phocas broken on the wheel, Lycaon cast to the dogs, and Attalus thrust into a forge. But none of those that tamed these tyrants, these mighty Nimrods, have been able to tame the tyrant sin in their own bosoms.—*Brooks.*

Suppose I go to a blacksmith and say, "Make me a very long and heavy chain of these dimensions. When done I will pay you." He lays aside his engagements and goes hard at work. I call as arranged and say, "I have concluded to make the chain longer; work on another week." Flattered with the promise of a fresh reward he toils on. I call again and still insist "it is too short." "But," says he, "my iron is expended and so is my strength. I want my pay." I urge him to add the last link of which he is capable. Then instead of paying him suppose I blind him hand and foot and cast him into a furnace of fire. *Such is the service of sin.—C. Field.*

There is grace in Christ sufficient for us. Ver. 36.—When we enter upon war with some petty New Zealand chief our troops expect to have their charges defrayed, and we pay them gold by thousands as their expenses may require; but when an army marches against a grim monarch in an unbroken country we have to pay by millions. And thus if we have an unusual struggle with some tremendous foe the riches of Christ's grace abound to meet all our liabilities.—*Spurgeon.*

The superiority of Christianity over other religions was thus illustrated by a converted Chinaman. "A man had fallen into a deep pit and was unable to move. Confucius passed by and said, 'Poor fellow, I am sorry for you. Why were you such a fool as to get in there! If you ever get out don't get in again.' Next came a Buddhist priest. He looked down and said, 'Poor fellow, if you scramble up two thirds of the way I might reach down and help you out.' Last of all the Saviour came, reached entirely down to the bottom, lifted him up, set him on his feet, and said, 'Go and sin no more.'"

Sinners carry out the designs of Satan. Ver. 44.—A colored preacher after discouraging on the text, "Ye shall not surely die," was met by two reckless young men, who said, "Father Haynes, have you heard the good news?" "No," said Mr. Haynes; "what is it?" "It is great news, indeed," said the other, "and if true your business is done." "What is it?" asked Mr. Haynes again. "Why," said the first, "the devil is dead." Lifting up both hands he placed them on the heads of the young men and solemnly said, "You poor, fatherless children, what will become of you!"

TEACHING HINTS.

The time is still the feast of tabernacles; and Jesus is again in the temple. Probably he remained at night with Mary and Martha at Bethany, and through the day taught in the temple, or walked with his disciples through the streets of the city.

There are two distinct subjects in this lesson, presented in strong contrast. **I. The children of God. Vers. 31-36. II. The children of Satan. Vers. 33-47.**

I. What do these verses teach us concerning the children of God? God has his children in this world, and some of their traits are here presented to our notice.

1.) *They believe in Christ.* Ver. 3. To believe in Christ is more than simply to conclude in a general way that he is worthy of credence. It is to entrust one's self to Christ, just as we entrust ourselves to a railroad train when we take a journey; or entrust ourselves to a physician when we are ill; or give ourselves up to a commander when we enlist in an army. It means belief, confidence, submission, obedience, all in one. This believing is the condition of all blessings under the Gospel.

2.) *They abide in Christ's word.* Ver. 31. They manifest their faith by their fidelity. There is no "six weeks' religion" during a warm revival, dropping into coldness and deadness when the meetings cease. It is a continued service proceeding from a constant faith.

3.) *They know the truth.* Ver. 32. The word in the original for "know" is the verb meaning "to have full knowledge." He who learns the truth by fellowship with Christ receives it at fountain-head, and understands it thoroughly. And the knowledge of God can only be gained through Christ, the great Teacher. It is the divine mystery, which he only can impart to the disciple.

4.) *They have freedom.* Vers. 32-36. Every sinner is a slave, for a power outside of himself directs his action. The drunkard says, "I can't help myself; an appetite drives me to drink." The passionate man says, "I am not my own master when I get angry." Are they not slaves to a power above their own will? The only way whereby a slave may become free is for some authority higher than that of his master to break his chain. The Son of God enters the house of the strong man and sets his slaves at liberty. The free man is the disciple of Christ.

II. *The children of Satan.* Then there is a devil, who would make men believe that he is not, and that consequently they need not fear him. The Scriptures are as clear concerning the existence of Satan as they are concerning the existence of God. The traits of Satan's children, as here set forth, are:

1.) *They are slaves.* Vers. 33-36. There are two classes of men in the world; freemen in Christ and slaves to Satan. To this latter class belongs every sinner. They show their service and reveal their master by their acts, and often by their very appearance. The drunkard wears the livery of his master in his red nose and bloated face. The liar, the swearer, the stealer all show whom they serve.

2.) *They are enemies of Christ.* Ver. 37. These slaves of Satan were ready to kill Christ. Their descendants in the ages since, from Roman emperors down to Spanish inquisitors, have shown the same spirit. Their brood is not so large nor so powerful as once, but it still exists. In every place may be found those who are opposed to religion and to the Church; who would destroy the Gospel if they could.

3.) *They show a likeness to their father.* Vers. 39-44. These Jews claimed to be the children of Abraham. "Not so," said Jesus. "If you were the children of Abraham, you would be like Abraham. But you show the traits of your true father, the devil." As in every true Christian there is some feature of Christ, so in every sinner there is some likeness to Satan; and it grows more and more marked as they approximate more to his character.

4.) *They have no affinity with God.* Vers. 45-47. They do not like God's truth (ver. 45); they will not hear God's words. Ver. 47. There is in them no desire after God and the right; but an opposition to him. Just as oil and water will not mix, so the children of Satan have an aloofness of nature with respect to God.

There is a story of two men who by mistake took the wrong steamer at a wharf. One was a gambler and horse jockey, who got on board the boat going to a camp-meeting; and the other was an earnest Christian who took the steamer going to the races. How utterly wretched were those two men, for each was out of his element! There is nothing in common between the children of God and the children of Satan.

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LESSON XI.—September 13.

CHRIST AND THE BLIND MAN.—JOHN 9, 1-11, 35-38.

GOLDEN TEXT.—One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.—John 9. 25.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—On a Sabbath day in the fall of A. D. 29, between the feast of tabernacles in October and the feast of dedication in December. There were seven miracles of healing mercy wrought on the Sabbath: 1. Withered hand (Matt. 12, 9); 2. Demoniac at Capernaum (Mark 1, 21); 3. Simon's wife's mother (Mark 1, 29); 4. Woman bowed down eighteen years (Luke 13, 11); 5. Dropsical man (Luke 14, 1); 6. Paralytic at Bethesda (John 5, 10); 7. Man born blind.—*Condensed from various authors.*

PLACES.—1. Generally Jerusalem. 2. Specially the Pool of Siloam. One of the pools of Jerusalem, entitled also Siloah or Shiloah. Neh. 8, 15; Isa. 8, 6. It is identified with a pool which stands to the south of the temple mount, and consists of an oblong tank, partly hewn out of the rock and partly built of masonry, measuring about fifty-three feet in length, eighteen feet in width, and nineteen feet in depth, with a flight of steps leading down to the bottom.

Authorized Version.

1 And as *Jésus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did ¹sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Revised Version.

1 And as he passed by, he saw a man

2 blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Rab^bi, who did sin, this man, or his parents,

¹ Acts 22. 4.

1. THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. Verses 1-5.

1, 2. As Jesus passed by.—This miracle of mercy was what we would now call incidental. He saw.—It was Jesus who saw the blind man, not the blind man who came to him; and so earnestly did he look upon him that even his disciples perceived it.—*Chrysostom.* A man.—A professional beggar. Such wretches have always been plentiful in the East. The gates of the temple appear to have been thronged with them. Blind from his birth.—This in the case of a beggar would be no secret. He probably whined his mournful fate into the ear of every passer-by. Compare this case with that in Luke 18, 35-43. There the blind man appeals to Christ, here Christ heals without being appealed to. There, in the stillness of the country, the noise of the multitude awakens the attention of the blind man. Here, in the crowded city, there is nothing to announce to the blind man a healer until Christ speaks to him. There, therefore, he awaits the petition; here he does not. Congenital blindness is incurable by modern science.—*Abbott.* Master.—Better, *Rabbi*. Who did sin.—It was not only a Jewish opinion that such afflictions were a divine punishment for sin; it is the teaching of experience that special diseases are frequently the natural consequence of sin either in the sufferer or in his ancestry, and the teaching of Scripture that all disease, and even death itself, is the fruit of sin. This truth Christ had already recognized in at least two instances (Mark 2: 5; John 5: 14), and it is enforced both by warnings and by historical illustrations in the Old Testament. Lev. 23, 16; Deut. 28, 22; Num. 12, 10; 2 Kings 5, 27. The Jewish error consisted in believing that all special afflictions were divine visitations for special sins (Job. 4, 7; 8, 6), an opinion which was not confined to the Jews. Acts 23, 4. This error Christ here corrects. The question appears to be in spirit this, What is the explanation of this man's blindness? his own sin? That cannot be, for he was born blind! Is he then punished for his parents' sin?—*Abbott.*

Suffering is part of the divine idea. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Some misguided men preach a contrary doctrine; but our Lord has said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation."



Authorized Version.

8 Je'sus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but ^athat the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I ^amust work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I ^aam the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, ^ahe spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he ^aanointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, ^awash in the pool of Si-lo'am, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) ^aHe went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbors therefore, and they

Revised Version.

8 that he should be born blind? Je'sus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, ^aand

7 anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Si-lo'am (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 The neighbors therefore, and they

^a Chap. 11, 4. — ^a Chap. 4, 24; 6, 19, 36; 11, 9; 12, 23; 17, 4. — ^a Isa. 42, 6; 49, 6; Luke 2, 22; chap. 1, 8, 9; 3, 19; 5, 14; 12, 35, 46; Acts 13, 41; 1 John 2, 8. — ^a Mark 7, 32; 8, 23. — ^a Or, spread the clay upon the eyes of the blind man. — ^a Neh. 3, 15; Isa. 7, 6. — ^a 2 Kings 5, 14; Isa. 35, 5.

^a Or, and with the clay thereof anointed his eyes.

3, 4, 5. Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents.—That is, his blindness is not a punishment. But that—He was born blind *in order that*. Christ shows that there is a third alternative, which their question assumes that there is not.—*Plummer*. The works of God should be made manifest in him—Manifest to us by his miraculous cure; but this is not all. The work of God is to believe on him whom he hath sent (chap. 6. 29), and to this belief the blind man was brought by his cure. Ver. 38. Thus the work of God was made manifest, not only through him to us, but *in* him. Thus Christ gives the key to the Christian doctrine of suffering. It is inflicted sometimes as a special punishment for special sins (see references above), but more frequently it is a means of grace, inflicted either that by our endurance we may manifest the grace of God to others (2 Cor. 12. 9), or may be taught of God ourselves. Heb. 12. 6, 11. Compare with Christ's language here his declaration concerning the sickness and death of Lazarus. Chap. 11. 4.—*Abbott*.

The woes of men and the brevity of life should incite zeal. Vers. 4, 5. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

6. Spat on the ground . . . and he anointed the eyes . . . with the clay—Clay and spittle were both believed in ancient times to possess curative properties. Why Christ used them here is a matter only of conjecture. Certainly not as remedies, for one blind from birth could not be cured by a remedy so simple, and he who healed the blind men at Jericho by a touch (Matt. 20. 34) had no need here to resort to other means.—*Abbott*.

II. THE POOL OF SILOAM. Verses 7-11.

7. Wash in the pool—Literally, *Wash into the pool*, that is, "Wash off the clay into the pool," or "Go to the pool and wash." *Siloam*—See introductory note on PLACES. Which is by interpretation, Sent—The meaning of this addition has been doubted, but does not seem to me to be doubtful. The pool, by its very name, was a symbol of Him who was sent into the world to work the works of God (ver. 4) and who gives light to the world by providing a fountain in which not only all uncleanness is washed away, but all ignorance and blindness of heart.—*Abbott*. He went his way therefore—Compare with the cure of Naaman (2 Kings 5. 11, 13), who was in like manner bid to wash in Jordan, and only reluctantly, and after angry resistance, consented. Observe how great the trial to this blind man's faith, directed to take so considerable a walk, in his blindness, as a condition of cure. And came seeing—Has any poet ever attempted to describe this man's emotions on first seeing the world in which he had lived so long?—*Cambridge Bible*.

8, 9. The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was

Authorized Version.

which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Je'sus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Si-lo'am, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

35 Je'sus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on * the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Je'sus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and * it is he that talketh with thee.

Revised Version.

which saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he

9 that sat and begged? Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am he. They said therefore unto him, How then were thine eyes opened? He answered, The man that is called Je'sus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to Si-lo'am, and wash: so I went away and washed, and I received sight.

35 Je'sus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost

36 thou believe on * the Son of God? He answered and said, and who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? 37 Je'sus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh

* Matt. 14, 23; 16, 16; Mark 1, 1; chap. 10, 36; 1 John 5, 12, Chap. 4, 26.

* Many ancient authorities read the Son of man.

blind—The best manuscripts have *that he was a beggar*, not, as in our English version, *blind*. So, *Alford* and *Tischendorf*. Is not this he that sat and begged—Apparently he was a well-known beggar, like the one described in Acts 3, 2, 10. Comp. Luke 18, 35. Some said, etc.—The correct rendering varies slightly from our English version: *Some said, This is he. Others, No! but he is like him. He himself said, I am he.*

11. The first investigation is made informally and without prejudice by the common people. It is curiosity alone which inquires, and it is easily convinced of the facts in the case. The man's reply to his questioners is more laconic in the original than in our English version. It is literally, "*And going and washing, I saw.*" It reminds one of Cæsar's famous report, "*I came, I saw, I conquered.*"—*Abbott*. Note the gradual development of faith in the man's soul, and compare it with that of the Samaritan woman and of Martha. Here he merely knows Jesus's name and the miracle; in verse 17 he thinks him "a Prophet;" in verse 33 he is "of God;" in verse 35 he is "the Son of God." What writer of fiction in the second century could have executed such a study in psychology?—*Plummer*.

III. THE SON OF GOD. Verses 35-38.

Between this verse and the last of our lesson the evangelist tells how this beggar was brought before the Pharisees and cross-questioned. Verses 12 to 34 should be mastered by the teacher, and, in most cases, read in the class.

35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out—*Chrysostom*, *Tholuck*, and others have held that the indignant Pharisees drove him out of the court-room, but it is probable that they excommunicated him, in conformity to the resolution previously taken, ver. 22. Dost thou believe—There is an emphasis on *thou* in the original which cannot well be repeated in the English. Christ contrasts his belief with the disbelief of the Pharisees. Believest thou, whilst so many others are disbelievers?—*Trench*. On the Son of God—This probably should be "the Son of man;" a change of reading which does not essentially change the meaning.

36, 37, 38. Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him—The word translated Lord is only a general term of respect. It is sometimes translated Sir. Matt. 21, 30; chap. 4, 11, 15, 12, 49; 5, 7; 12, 21; 20, 15. It does not imply here that the man recognized in Jesus the Son

Authorised Version.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him.

Revised Version.

38 with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe.

of God. Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him—Rather, *Sire, I believe. And he revered him.*

Mercies received should lead to faith and service. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Vers. 37, 38.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Suffering is part of the divine idea. Ver. 1-3.—Suffering did not slip in at the fall, but is part of God's original method. I know enough of gardening to understand that if I would have a tree grow upon its south side I must cut off its branches there. Then all its forces go to repairing the injury and twenty buds shoot out where otherwise there would have been but one. History is a mighty, thundering declaration of the falsity of the sentiment that God is not a God who will let men suffer. The history of the world is all suffering. All our faculties are as really susceptible of pain as pleasure. Every nerve is provided with this twofold nature, and both of these are divine.—*Becher.*

The woes of men and the brevity of life should incite zeal. Vers. 4, 5.—When Wesley was about to go to Georgia as a missionary to the Indians an unbeliever said to him, "What is this, sir? Are you one of the knights-errant? How got Quixotism into your head? You have a good provision for life, and must you leave all to fight wind-mills—to convert savages in America?" He answered calmly, "Sir, if the Bible be not true I am a madman as you conceive, but if it be true *I am sober-minded.*"

Rowland Hill was a man of powerful voice and was sometimes completely carried away by his feelings. Once, when preaching at Worton, he exclaimed, "Because I am in earnest men call me an enthusiast. But I am not; mine are words of truth and soberness. When I first came here I was working on yonder hill. I saw a gravel pit fall in and bury three men alive. I shouted so loudly for help that I was heard in the town a distance of a mile. Help came, and the men were rescued. No one called me an enthusiast then. And when I see eternal destruction ready to fall upon sinners I must beseech them with cries and tears."

A neighboring minister once warned Dr. Morison that he was doing too much work. "Depend upon it," replied Dr. Morison, "the lazy minister dies first." Six months after he was sent for by his friend, and to his amazement found him dying. "Do you remember what you once said to me?" inquired the dying man. Stunned by finding his words invested with prophetic character, he said, "O, don't speak of that." "Yes, I must speak of it," said his friend. "It was the truth. Work, work while it is day, for now my night is here and I cannot work."

A Christian, who thought his work a failure, dreamed he was dead and in the city of God. There he met an old friend; and as they walked along the crystal pavements together, the dreamer was taken aside by one who pointed afar off and asked him what he saw. He replied, "A place like the world from which I came." "And what else?" "I see great multitudes of men stumbling as if blindfolded. Many are falling into a great pit and others are on the very brink." "Well, would you stay here and see countless thousands fall headlong into that gaping abyss and not turn a hand to stop them?" He begged to get back to the work of rescue.

Mercies received should lead to faith and service. Vers. 37, 38.—People seem to imagine that God keeps a gracious apothecary's shop with faith put up in bottles ready for purchasers. The spire that almost touches the stars does not rise isolated from the ground; beneath it and supporting it is the massive substructure, the vast cathedral of stone. So faith is the steep and spire of a life-building.

A Sunday-school boy was asked by the superintendent if his father was a Christian. *Yes, sir,* he replied, *but he is not working much at it.*—*Spurgeon.*

TEACHING HINTS.

Every miracle is an acted parable, showing some aspect in which "the kingdom of heaven is like." This miracle represents the sinner under the guise of a blind man, and shows a soul, not less than a body, coming out of darkness into light.

In the healing of the blind man two parties are shown. I. The Saviour, and II. The sufferer.

I. The Saviour. What he was then in giving sight, he is still in giving salvation. Notice his peculiar traits in this miracle.

1.) *Compassion.* Ver. 1. Christ saw the blind man, before his disciples saw him, and his look awakened their interest. Every-where we read of his sympathy with those in trouble. He saw what others would gladly refrain from seeing—the woes of men. It was this interest in lost humanity which led him to the earth, for he was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Before the blind man could call Jesus was ready to answer. So now, before the sinner seeks Christ, Christ seeks the sinner.

2.) *Omniscience.* Vers. 2, 3. He saw the past history of this man and his parents; and saw, too, his future history, how boldly, nay, how doggedly he would confess Christ, and how abundantly he would glorify God. He saw in this blind beggar splendid possibilities. So he saw Paul in the persecuting Saul, the reformer in the monk Martin Luther. So he sees what every man may become under divine grace.

3.) *Activity.* Vers. 4-7. Seeing these possibilities in this man he set at work to bring them out. His aim was to make out of this beggar a man of God. Toward this all instrumentalities combined—the clay, the pool, the tests to the man's character from neighbors and rulers. Do we realize that Jesus is taking the same pains to bring out of us the best that is in us?

4.) *Kingly Authority.* Ver. 7. He gave his command like a king, "Go, wash." There were man-made customs in the way, but he brushed them aside as one who spoke with authority. The hearts of men need just such a Master as this.

5.) *Divine power.* Vers. 7, 35-38. Only the divine physician could give sight to the blind-born. And only the Son of God has the right to claim the faith and worship of men.

II. Turn we now to the sufferer: A most interesting character, as unfolded by the gospel-writer. Note his condition, and his steps from darkness to light.

1.) *His darkness.* He was like the sinner, who cannot see God; whose nature is undeveloped, and who gropes in ignorance. Note texts showing blindness as a type of sin: John 11. 10; 12. 35; Rev. 8. 17; Isa. 60. 2; Eph. 4. 18; 1 Cor. 2. 14.

2.) *His opportunity.* One day Jesus of Nazareth passed by, looked upon him, and called to him. This was the opportunity of his life. Such an opportunity comes to every soul when God's Spirit strives within him, or God's Church invites him to salvation.

3.) *His obedience.* A strange command was given by Christ, that he should walk across the city of Jerusalem with two clots of mud upon his face, to be seen by every passer-by; and should wash in a pool outside the wall. There was no word of explanation, and no promise of healing. Yet he obeyed without murmuring or inquiry. That was the obedience of faith.

4.) *His transformation.* A wonderful change, from darkness to light, placing the man in new relations with the universe. But it is a greater change when God converts a soul and makes all things new.

5.) *His testimony.* Notice how positive, how repeated, how consistent was this man's testimony to the work wrought in him. He did not falter when his witnessing cost him expulsion from the synagogue. So should every one tell his experience of salvation.

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LESSON XII.—September 20.

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—JOHN 10. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.—Psa. 23. 1.

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT.—This parable was probably uttered in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, A. D. 29. The figure is drawn from the spectacle, likely at any evening to be witnessed on the hill-sides of Judea, of a flock of sheep gathered from the different fields in which they had been wandering, and *following* their shepherd, who conducts them to the sheep-fold, which they enter one by one for protection, the shepherd going before and leading them in. To understand aright its meaning two facts often forgotten must be borne in mind: (1) That the metaphor is used in the Old Testament and for a double purpose; sometimes the shepherd is the religious teacher of Israel, whose unfaithfulness is rebuked in the prophets (Jer. 23. 1-4; Ezek. chap. 34); sometimes the shepherd is the Lord, who leads, defends, and feeds the soul which trusts in him (Psa. 23; Isa. 40. 11); (2) the parable is closely connected with the discourse concerning blindness, growing out of the cure of the blind man, and is given for the purpose of emphasizing and carrying out the warnings therein contained against the Pharisees as blind leaders of the blind. Matt. 15. 14.—*Abbott*.

Authorized Version.

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He
that entereth not by the door into the

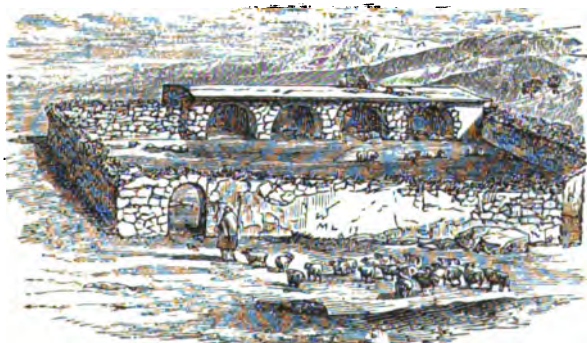
Revised Version.

1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He
that entereth not by the door into the

¹ Isa. 56. 10; Jer. 23. 21; Heb. 5. 4.

I. THE SHEEP-FOLD. Verses 1-6.

1. Verily, verily—This double affirmation, peculiar to this gospel, never occurs at the beginning of a discourse, but either in continuation, to introduce some deep truth, or in reply. This verse is no exception. The connection seems to be that the Pharisees by their conduct to the blind man had proved themselves bad shepherds, but he has found the Good Shepherd; they had cast



A SHEEP-FOLD.

him out of doors, but he has found the Door: they had put him forth to drive him away, the Good Shepherd puts his sheep forth to lead them.—*Plummer*. He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold—Sheep-folds, as usually constructed in the East, are low, flat buildings erected on the sheltered side of valleys, and when the nights are cold the flocks are shut up in them, but in ordinary weather they are merely kept within the yard. During the day, of course, they are led forth to pasture by the shepherds. The folds are defended by a wide

Authorized Version.

sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the ^adoor is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him ^athe porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And ^aa stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Je'sus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Je'sus unto them again,

Revised Version.

fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is ^athe shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name,

4 and leadeth them out. When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for

5 they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This ^aparable spake Je'sus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Je'sus therefore said unto them

^a Isa. 61. 1; Acts 90. 28; 1 Cor. 12. 28.—^b 1 Cor. 16. 9; 1 Pet. 1. 12.—^c Prov. 12. 27; Gal. 1. 6; Eph. 4. 14; Col. 2. 4.

¹ Or, a shepherd.—² Or, proverb.

stonewall, crowned by sharp thorns, which the wolf will rarely attempt to scale.—*Abbott.* The robber is a brigand, a more formidable criminal than the thief.

2. He that entereth in by the door the same is the shepherd of the sheep—Rather, a shepherd. Christ declares to the Pharisees, who reject him as their Messiah, that there is a double test of the religious teacher: (1) He must enter into the church by the way by which he directs the sheep to enter—there is not one salvation for the teacher and another for the taught; the door is the same to all; and (2) he must enter by the one only door, Jesus Christ. Whoever comes in the name and with authority of Jesus Christ is a shepherd of the sheep; whoever comes to preach any other gospel comes to rob the sheep of their Saviour and salvation. Gal. 1. 8, 9; 2 John, ver. 10.—*Abbott.* Parallels to this particular figure of the Good Shepherd are found in the Synoptists. Take together Luke 15. 4-7; Matt. 18. 12, 13; 15. 24; 9. 36; and 12. 11, 29; and you have an almost exact parallel to this allegory.—*Sanday.*

3. To him the porter openeth—The Holy Spirit is especially he who opens the door to the shepherds; see frequent uses of this symbolism by the apostles (Acts 14. 27; 1 Cor. 16. 9; 2 Cor. 2. 12; Col. 4. 3); and instance of the porter shutting the door, Acts 16. 6, 7. *Calleth by name*—Porter and others describe at length the promptitude with which the Oriental sheep distinguish the voice of their shepherd from the cleverest imitations. In many flocks each sheep is named, and knows his name.

Christ's people know and obey his voice. See ILLUSTRATIONS. There is close personal intercourse between the Good Shepherd and his sheep.

4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him—The true pastor is an example and leader as well as a teacher of his people. 1 Cor. 11. 1; Gal. 4. 12; Phil. 3. 17; 1 Thess. 1. 6.—*Abbott.*

6. But they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them—The Pharisees to whom he was speaking did not see what shepherds and sheep-folds had to do with them. They could hardly have given greater proof how little they understood the things which were written in the books they prized most—how their worship of the divine letter had destroyed all commerce between their minds and the realities which it set forth!—*Maurice.*

II. THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP. Verses 7-9.

7. Then said Jesus—Better, Therefore said Jesus again. I am the door—That is, through me all the truths and blessings of religion are to be communicated to the flock, or people of God. Whoever addresses them as an authorized teacher must enter through me.—*Norton.*

Authorized Version.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am ^a the door of the sheep.

8 All ^a that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The ^a thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

Revised Version.

again, Verily, verily, I say unto you,

8 I am the door of the sheep. All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture. The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may ^a have *it* abundantly.

^a Eph. 2, 18; Heb. 10, 19. — Jer. 23, 1; 50, 6; Acts 5, 26, 27.
— Acts 20, 29; 2 Pet. 2, 1.

^a Or, have abundance.

8. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers—*Before* is not here an adverb of time, but signifies precedence in rank or authority as it does in Col. 1, 17; Jas. 5, 12, and 1 Pet. 4, 8, and the passage might be read, *All whosoever come claiming precedence above me are thieves and robbers.* The verb *come* is in the aorist tense, and does not necessarily indicate a coming in the past only, but would be properly used for the enunciation of a general principle. The prophets of the Old Testament claimed no such precedence above Christ; on the contrary, they were but his heralds; and John the Baptist distinctly disavowed such precedence. Matt. 3, 14; chap. 1, 26, 27; 3, 30. The Pharisees, on the other hand, denied Christ's right to teach because he did not belong to their schools (chap. 7, 15), and in their conference with the blind man had put themselves above Christ. Chap. 9, 16, 24. If this be a correct interpretation,



THE GOOD SHEPHERD. (From the Catacombs.)

Christ's claim here is directly antagonistic to those who would make an eclectic religion, by selecting truth from all the world's religious teachers, including Christ among the rest. For he declares all to be robbing the world of truth, not imparting it, who deny him the pre eminent rank as a religious teacher. On the other hand, he does not stigmatize genuine moral teachers, such as Buddha or Socrates, as thieves and robbers, for they had no knowledge of Christ, and claimed no precedence above him.—*Abbott.* Whatever differences may arise as to the meaning of certain of the minor turns of this passage, there is no room for doubt concerning the larger doctrine which Christ here lays down. It is simply that in him is the only means of eternal salvation. All who antagonize Christ are denounced. But the sheep did not hear them.—This has been eminently true of all teachers in the Church who have put themselves above Christ; it is the preachers of Christ who alone have secured the world's attention. This is illustrated by the history of Paul (2 Cor. 4, 5), Luther, Wesley, and, in our own times, Spurgeon, Moody, and others.—*Abbott.*

Authorized Version.

11 I ^aam the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12 But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and ^aleaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, ^aand know my *sheep*, and ^aam known of mine.

Revised Version.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the

12 sheep. He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scatter-

13 eth *them*: *he fleeth* because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me,

^a Isa. 40. 11; Ezek. 34. 23; 37. 24; Heb. 13. 20; 1 Pet. 2. 25; 5. 4.—^aZech. 11. 16.—^aTim. 5. 19.—^aEph. 1. 17; Phil. 5. 10; 1 John 5. 20.

III. THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Verses 11-16.

11. I am the good shepherd—More literally, the *beautiful* shepherd; but this word, though strictly speaking æsthetic, was used by the Greeks to designate moral beauty, and referred to the most symmetrical and perfect goodness. Throughout the Old Testament the Church of God is regarded as a fold, Israel as a flock, and Jehovah himself as the shepherd. Psa. 23; Isa. 40. 11; Ezek. 34; Jer. 23; Mic. 7. 14; Zech. 11. It is impossible but that Christ's auditors should have understood him as claiming to be this Shepherd of Israel. Observe the difference between the phraseology here and in verse 2; here *the* good shepherd; there *a* shepherd.—Abbott. No image has penetrated more deeply into the mind of Christendom. *Giveth his life for the sheep*—The good shepherd may or may not be called on to die for his sheep; but he always lays down his life for them. To lay down the life is to consecrate it, devote it to the flock; as a mother, who, living or dying, belongs to her children and surrenders herself to them. So we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John 3. 16), though comparatively few are ever called on to die for them. Wicklif and Luther as truly laid down their lives for the flock as Huss and Tyndale. The sacrifice of Christ consisted not merely in his death—which was indeed in its mere physical aspects the least part of it—but in his whole incarnation. His entire life from his advent to the grave was laid down for his sheep.—Abbott.

We have life, protection, and spiritual comfort in Christ. See ILLUSTRATIONS. No true Christian can consistently give way to despondency.

Christ laid down his life for us. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

12. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth—Every clause in this sentence must be carefully weighed by the student; for every clause is full of weighty significance. There is nothing in the sentence, if the whole be considered, adverse to a paid ministry. Not every one who is hired is a hireling (1 Tim. 5. 18); only he *who serves for hire*, whether emoluments or reputation; who accordingly is not a shepherd, that is, has none of the shepherd's instincts and none of the shepherd's love for his flock; *whose own the sheep are not*, that is, who has none of that sense of ownership in his flock which Paul experienced and expressed (1 Cor. 4. 14, 15; 1 Thess. 2. 11; 1 Tim. 1. 2; Tit. 1. 4; Philem. 10); who, therefore, *careth not for the sheep* (ver. 13), but only for himself.—Abbott. The wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep—Any and every willful and determined opponent to truth and righteousness is a wolf.

14, 15. And know my sheep, and am known of mine—Better, and *I know mine, and mine know me*. If you think rightly of the Son of man, think of the person who knows thoroughly every thing that each one of you is feeling, and cannot utter to others or to himself—every temptation from riches, from poverty, from solicitude, from society, from gifts of intellect, from want of them, from the gladness of the spirit, from the barrenness and dreariness of it, from the warmth of affection, and from the drying up of affection, from the anguish of doubt and the dullness of indifference, from the whirlwind of passion and the calm which succeeds it, from the

Authorised Version.	Revised Version.
15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.	15 even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down
16 And ¹⁵ other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; ¹⁶ and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.	16 my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must ¹⁷ bring, and they shall hear my voice; and ¹⁸ they shall become one flock, one shepherd.
¹⁵ Isa. 54. 8.— ¹⁶ Ezek. 37. 22; Eph. 2. 14.	¹⁷ Or, lead.— ¹⁸ Or, there shall be one flock.

vile thoughts which spring out of fleshly appetites and indulgences, from the darker, more terrible suggestions which are presented to the inner will. Believe that he knows all these, that he knows *you*. And then believe this also, that all he knows is through intense, inmost sympathy, not with the evil that is assaulting you, but with you who are assaulted by it. Believe that knowledge, in this the scriptural sense of it—the human as well as the divine sense of it—is absolutely inseparable from sympathy.—*Maurice*. As the Father knoweth me, even so, etc.—This rendering entirely obscures the true meaning. There should be no full stop at the end of verse 14, and the sentence should run, *I know mine, and mine know me, even as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father*. Personal acquaintance begets sympathy, so that the Hebrews were wont to use the verb *know* in the sense of *loving* and *caring for*. Jesus knows every believing, trustful soul—knows each one perfectly; never fails to note and feel every sorrow, every want, and responds to every outgoing toward himself of love, gratitude, and trust.—*Coules*.

16. Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold—Referring to his sincere but unsheltered followers in heathen lands. There shall be one fold—Not *one fold*, but *one flock*; no one exclusive inclosure of an outward Church—but one flock, all knowing the one Shepherd, and known of him.—*Alford*.

Unity is the final purpose of God. SEE ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

* Christ's people know and obey his voice. Ver. 3.—An American traveling in Syria saw three shepherds bring their flocks to the same brook, and the flocks drank together. One shepherd arose and called out "*Men-ah, men-ah*" (Arabic for "Follow me"). His sheep came out of the common herd and followed him. The next shepherd did the same, and his also came out and followed him. They did not stop to count them. The American said to the remaining shepherd, "Give me your cloak, turban, and crook, and see if they won't follow me." So he arose and called out "*Men-ah, men-ah*," but not a sheep moved an inch. They "knew not the voice of a stranger." "Will your flock never follow any body but you?" "O, yes," he said, "sometimes a sheep gets sick, and then it will follow any one."

A man in India was accused of stealing a sheep. He was brought before the judge, and the supposed owner was also present. Both claimed the sheep and had witnesses to prove their claim. The judge ordered the animal brought into court, and sent one man into another room, while he told the other to call the sheep. But the sheep would not go to him. The other man in an adjoining room gave a kind of "chuck," upon which the sheep bounded away toward him at once. It was decided he was the real owner.

Christ laid down his life for us. Ver. 11.—In the French Revolution a young man was condemned to the guillotine, and shut up in prison. When the lists were called his father, whose name was exactly the same as the son's, answered, and rode in the gloomy tumbrel to the place of execution. His head rolled beneath the ax, a victim to mighty love. But Christ "died for the *ungodly*."

Napoleon, in exile at St. Helena, said to Mentholon: "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded great empires, but upon force; Jesus Christ alone founded his empire upon love—pure, unselfish love toward the lost—and to-day millions would die for him; none else is like him."

We have life, protection, and spiritual comfort in Christ. Vers. 9, 10.

Out in the West when the prairie grass catches fire the flames rise twenty feet high and roll so rapidly that the fleetest horse cannot escape. The frontiersmen light the grass around them, stand on the burnt district, and are safe. There is only one spot which the fire of God's justice has swept over. Sheltered on Calvary we are safe.—*Moody*.

The Christian in the world is like an iceberg in a swelling sea. Ships strain and shiver in the agitated waters. But the iceberg casts off the breakers unmoved, and stands stable, like the everlasting hills. The reason is its bulk is embedded in calm water beneath the tumult that rages on the surface. Although Christians float in the same sea of life with other men and waves break over them they remain unmoved, because the chief part of their being lies deep beyond the reach of those superficial commotions.—*Arnold*.

Unity is the final purpose of God. Ver. 16.—An old Scottish Methodist, who had clung vehemently to one of two small sects on opposite sides of the street, said, when dying: "The street I'm now traveling in has no sides, and if power were now given me I would preach purity of life and purity of doctrine less. Since I was laid by here I have had whisperings of the still small voice telling me that the wranglings of faith will no'er be heard in the kingdom I am nearing; and, as love cements all differences, I'll perhaps find the place roomier than I thought in times past."—*Dean Stanley*.

When seven men imprisoned in a Pennsylvania coal-mine were rescued after five days' imprisonment they were asked if they hoped to escape. "We prayed for it," was the reply; "We prayed together. Some were Protestants and some Catholics, but when death is as close as that you only think of God."

TEACHING HINTS.

The best method of teaching this lesson is to show its connection with the general course of the story; then to read it verse by verse with the class, explaining the allusions to Oriental customs of sheep-herding; and then to interpret in turn each element in the parable.

1. The Connection. This is closer than appears on the surface. The Pharisees had expelled from church membership the blind man whom Christ had healed; and Jesus would show that they are not true but false shepherds who rob and wrong the sheep committed to their care.

2. The Parable. The teacher will find many points wherein the life of the shepherd in the East is different from that in our land, especially the allusions to the *fold*, the *porter*, *following the shepherd*, etc.

3. The Fold. This represents the true Church of Christ, of which every believer is a member. It is set apart from wolves without, and from the world; and is protected by watchful porters, who may represent the ministers of the world. God's people in this world need to be brought together and kept in fellowship by the guardian care of the Church.

4. The Door. Note that here are two parables, or allegories, the first ending at verse 9, in which Christ represents himself as the door, through which both sheep and under-shepherds enter into the fold. Christ alone can admit to his church.

5. The False Shepherds. These are of three kinds: the *robber*, who seeks to plunder; the *stranger*, who has no real relation to the sheep; and the *hireling shepherd*, who keeps the flock only for his own gain, and forsakes it in the hour of peril. To these may be added the *wolf*, who is the open enemy of God's cause, and its wild destroyer, represented by the infidel in our time. Show the application of this part of the parable to our time.

6. The Good Shepherd. Notice what is said of him in this relation. 1.) He calls his own sheep by name (ver. 5), for he knows each follower. Every disciple in the world-wide Church has an individual place in the Master's heart. 2.) He *leads* his sheep (vers. 3, 4), and will call upon us to go where he has gone before us. 3.) He *owns* his sheep, for he has bought them with a price. (Vers. 12-14.) 4.) He protects his sheep from stranger, from thief, and from wolf. 5.) He *gives his own life* for his sheep, saving them at the cost of his own blood. Vers. 11-15.

7. The Flock. Notice how tender is the tie between the Good Shepherd and his flock. 1.) They *know* him. Vers. 3, 4. 2.) They *follow* him. Vers. 4, 5, 8. 3.) They *hear* his voice. Ver. 16. 4.) They *trust* in him fully. The sheep are they who have personal relation of faith in Christ.



"TAKE FAST HOLD OF INSTRUCTION."

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LESSON XIII.—September 27.

TEMPERANCE LESSON.—PROV. 4. 18-19.

Authorized Version.

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is

Revised Version.

13 Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go:

Keep her; for she is thy life.

14 Enter not into the path of the wicked, And walk not in the way of evil men.

15 Avoid it, pass not by it; Turn from it, and pass on.

16 For they sleep not, except they have done mischief;

I TAKE FAST HOLD. Verses 13-17.

13. Take fast hold—Seize strongly, and keep hold, as for life. Learn all thou canst, retain what thou hast learned, and keep the reason continually in view—it is *for thy life*.—CLARKS. Comp. chap. 3-18. The figure of laying hold with the hand suggests earnest effort.—FOUSSET. Some notice the parallel between the phrase, *she is thy life*, and the incarnate Wisdom or Logos (John 1. 4), of which it is said, "In Him was life."—HUNTER. Statistical and scientific information concerning no evil can be as easily secured as that bearing on the use of intoxicants. And every advocate of temperance, whatever other means he may take, should conscientiously keep himself well informed, and do his utmost to disseminate such instruction.

14. Enter not into the path of the wicked—Never associate with those whose life is irregular and sinful.—CLARKS. Here begins a dissuasive from evil association, that fruitful source of mischief to all classes, especially to the young, who are the more imitative, and their habits not yet fixed. Evil men—Primarily such as were noted in chapter 1—men of violence and blood.—HUNTER. The temptation to indulge in strong drink begins almost always with personal temptation. It is a companionable vice. If (verse 13) it is criminal to be ignorant of the awful evil of intemperance, how additionally wicked must it be to follow evil example when already we know the terrible results.

15. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away—These various phrases say in strongest terms, Have nothing whatever to do with it; get to the utmost distance from it.—HUNTER. Total abstinence and unsleeping hostility to the traffic are the only safeguards.

16. They sleep not—A strong mode of saying they are restless to do evil. They love it more than they do their necessary sleep. Except they have done mischief—The night

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
taken away, unless they cause <i>some</i> to fall.	And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause <i>some</i> to fall.
17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence.	17 For they eat the bread of wickedness, And drink the wine of violence.
18 But ¹ the path of the just ² is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.	18 But the path of the righteous is as ¹ the shining light, That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.
19 The ³ way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.	19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: They know not at what they stumble.
¹ Matt. 5, 14; Phil. 2, 15.— ² Sam. 22, 4.— ³ 1 Sam. 2, 9; John 12, 34.	¹ Or, the light of dawn.

is their time for spoil and depredation. And they must gain some booty before they go to rest. *Clarke*. "Mischief" is hardly strong enough; *wickedness* would be better. Comp. Mal. 2, 8.—*Hunter*. Of liquor-sellers this verse is literally true. Every pint of intoxicants they sell "does mischief;" and if their business decreases, they are, like all other tradesmen, filled with anxiety because of their lessening income. Every new drunkard made is of financial advantage to them.

17. For they eat the bread of wickedness.—By privately stealing. And drink the wine of violence.—By highway robbery.—*Clarke*. They have as strong an appetite for wickedness and violence as for food and intoxicating drink.—*Hunter*. But men whose income depends on the indulgence by others of habits which lead to ungovernable excess as really "eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence" as do highway robbers.

II. THE PATH OF THE JUST. Verses 18, 19.

18. But the path of the just—The path of the wicked is gloomy, dark, and dangerous; that of the righteous is open, luminous, and instructive. This verse contains a fine metaphor; it refers to the *sun* rising above the horizon and the increasing twilight, till his beams shine full upon the earth. The truly wise man is but in his twilight here below; but he is in a state of glorious preparation for the realms of everlasting light; till at last, emerging from darkness and the shadows of death, he is ushered into the full blaze of endless felicity.—*Clarke*.

19. As darkness—Thick or dense darkness, the opposite of the *shining* of the righteous. See ver. 18; also John 11, 9, 10; 12, 35.—*Hunter*. As shining light increases from twilight to noonday splendor, so the course of the just increases in purity, but that of the wicked is as thickest darkness, in which one knows not on what he stumbles (20-22). Comp. ver. 30, 13; chap. 8, 8, etc.—*Fausset*. The truth contained in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses is of the broadest application; but it has no more apt illustration than that supplied by the great "liquor struggle" in our land. For the advocates of temperance, individual and collective, the outcome will be glorious. "The stars in their courses" fight against the advocates of evil.

TEACHING HINTS.

This lesson should be treated from the temperance point of view, and its application on that subject should be emphasized, though not to the exclusion of other thoughts respecting character in general.

1. Verse 18 forms a good introduction. Its theme is *Instruction*, which is figuratively represented as a being having in her hands blessings for men. Note what is said: 1.) "Take fast hold;" if we would have knowledge we must seize it; it will not come to us. 2.) "Let her not go; keep her;" there is need of perseverance in seeking after truth, which is not gained in an hour. 3.) "She is thy life;" a strong statement, yet not too strong; for life is hardly life without knowledge; and eternal life comes through knowledge given from on high.

2. The path of the wicked is the subject of the rest of the lesson, with the exception of verse 18.

1.) Note that wickedness is a *path*. Ver. 14. It may seem to involve only one act, but that

act leads to others; and he who takes one misstep finds that soon he is in a path. How true especially is that of the way of intemperance! One glass; but it is the first step in the drunkard's road.

2.) Note the desire of wicked people to *make others like themselves*. Ver. 16. They enjoy a secret satisfaction in seeing good men fall. They can scarcely sleep in peace unless they lead others into their own way. Every drinker is a drunkard-maker, by inviting others to drink, and by sneering at those who abstain.

3.) Note the *harm done* by these men. Ver. 17. The bread of wickedness, as if guilt were their food; the wine of violence, doing injury to others, by their example, their influence, and often by positive acts, for every crime in the calendar is the result of strong drink.

4.) Note the *darkness* of their way. Ver. 19. They are getting farther and farther from the light. Their minds are darkened, for they are no longer clear in discernment. Their characters are darkened, for they are blind to the distinctions between good and evil. Their hearts are darkened, for they are no longer responsive to love, but throw off the restraints of pure affection. They go by a dark path to a darker doom.

5.) Turn back to verse 15, and note the *counsel*, "Avoid it," etc. This is the only way to escape the evils of sin. Keep away from the river, and you will not be carried over the falls. Touch not the glass, and you will never die a drunkard. Seek good companions, and you will not be led astray by evil associates.

3. The path of the righteous is sketched in a single verse, in contrast with the way of darkness and of sin.

1.) It is the way of *the just*, the man who takes the right for his aim, and makes it his principle.

3.) It is a *shining* way, bright and glorious, from an enlightened conscience and from the peace of God.

4.) It is a *growing* light; increasing peace, greater enjoyment, as one travels farther upon the path.

5.) It ends in the *perfect day*; a completeness of Christian joy here, and the glory of the heavenly city hereafter.

Which of these two paths is the better one for a youth to take?

For ILLUSTRATIONS ON TEMPERANCE see APPENDIX.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.*

LESSON I.—October 4.

CHRIST RAISING LAZARUS.—JOHN 11. 21-44.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.—
John 11. 25.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Probably the latter part of February or the early part of March, A. D. 30. It was followed, after the brief retirement at Ephraim, by the triumphal march to Jerusalem. See *ENVIRONMENTS*.

PLACE.—Bethany. There never appears to have been any doubt as to the site of Bethany, which is now known by a name derived from Lazarus—el' Azariyeh. It lies on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, a mile beyond the summit, and not very far from the point at which the road to Jericho begins its more sudden descent toward the Jordan valley. The place is now but a ruinous village of some twenty families. In it are shown the traditional sites of the house and tomb of Lazarus, and of the house of Simon the leper. As to the real age and character of these remains there is at present no information to guide us; they are first heard of in the fourth century.—*Grove*.

ENVIRONMENTS.—There is nothing in John to indicate the time at which this miracle took place; and there is no general agreement among harmonists respecting it. *Robinson* places it immediately at the close of Christ's Judean ministry and prior to his ministry in Perea; *Anderson* and *Ellicott* place it at the close of the Perea ministry and immediately preceding the passion week. This date is the more probable. It seems to have been the immediate occasion both of the triumphal procession accorded to Jesus by the spontaneous action of the common people, and of the more deliberate determination on the part of the ecclesiastics of Jerusalem to put him to death. It does not seem reasonable, therefore, to suppose that a long period of active service in another part of the Holy Land intervened between this greatest miracle wrought by Christ and the effects which it produced, both upon the church party and upon the common people.—*Abbott*.

Authorized Version.

21 Then said Martha unto Je'sus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

Revised Version.

21 Martha therefore said unto Je'sus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my

I. JESUS AND MARTHA. Verses 21-27.

21, 22. Then said Martha—Martha, impulsive and warm-hearted, rushed out to meet Jesus when she heard of his approach. Thoughtful Mary still sat musing, waiting.—*Covela*. If thou hadst been here—Not a reproach, however gentle; for she does not say, "Hadst thou come," but an expression of deep regret. Comp. 5. 31. The sisters believe that Christ could and would have *healed* Lazarus; their faith and hope are yet hardly equal to anticipating his raising him from the dead.—*Plummer*. Her language expresses the very essence of soul-torture

* FOR GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDIES OF THE SECOND SIX MONTHS, see pages 12, 20.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.	22 brother had not died. And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.
23 Je'sus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.	23 Je'sus saith unto her, Thy brother
24 Mar'tha saith unto him, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day.	24 shall rise again. Mar'tha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.
25 Je'sus said unto her, I am 'the resurrection, and the 'life: he 'that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:	25 Je'sus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall
26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?	26 he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Be-

^a Chap. 2. 21.—^b Dan. 12. 2; 1 Thess. 4. 14; Phil. 3. 21.—
^c Luke 14. 14; chap. 8. 29.—^d Chap. 8. 21; 6. 29, 40.—^e Chap. 1. 4; 4. 25; 14. 6; Col. 3. 4; 1 John 1. 1, 2; 5. 11.—^f Chap. 2. 26; 1 John 3. 16.

at such times. In our affliction we continually echo Martha's "if," saying to ourselves, If we had done this, or if we had not done that, if it had not been for our blunder or that of our friends or our physician, our beloved would not have died. But read verse 4 of this chapter. Chance is the god of atheism, and is a comfortless god in the time of our trouble.—*Abbott*. Whatsoever thou wilt ask—Martha's phraseology is such as might have been employed if she had recognized Jesus to be one specially favored of God. She ascribes a sort of asking to him which he never ascribes to himself.—*M. R. Vincent*.

Faith lightens trouble. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Anxious care about food and clothing is entirely lifted from hearts strong in faith; and, though our earthly affections are so tender that no tie of love can be snapped asunder by death without acute pain, there comes even with that pain inexpressible comfort to the trusting Christian heart.

23, 24. Thy brother shall rise again—Remarkably Jesus advances by stages of progress toward disclosing the glad purpose of his heart.—*Cowles*. This method of calling out the experience of his pupil was a customary one with Jesus in all his instruction.—*Abbott*. I know that he shall rise again—As if she had said, Thou hast taught us that before.—*Cowles*. This conviction was probably in advance of average Jewish belief on the subject. The Old Testament declarations as to a resurrection are so scanty and obscure that the Sadducees could deny the doctrine, and the Pharisees had to resort to oral tradition to maintain it.—*Plummer*.

A living faith will grow by exercise. See comment on verse 21. It is often a healthful exercise to a struggling soul, beset by doubts, to find out exactly what he does believe, and cling in firm faith to that. God always more than keeps his promises, and every exercise of our faith deepens our spiritual experience.

25, 26. I am the resurrection—He draws her from her selfish grief to himself. There is no need for him to pray as man to God (5. 22); he (and none else) is the resurrection and the life. There is no need to look forward to the last day; he is (not "will be") the resurrection and the life. Comp. 14. 6; Col. 3. 4.—*Plummer*. Every believer is in reality and forever sheltered from death. To die with full light in the clear certainty of life which is in Jesus, to die only to continue to live to him, is no longer that fact which human language designates by the name of death. It is as though Jesus had said, In me the dead is certain to live, and the living is certain never to die.—*Godet*. Believest thou this? A searching question suddenly put. She answered with confidence, and gives the ground of her confidence.—*Plummer*. Nevertheless she answers as one not entirely sure that she has his full meaning.—*Cowles*.

Christ expects that we confess our faith in him personally, Vers. 26, 28. No one can be a true Christian secretly. How can one really hate sin or love God without desiring others to know it?

Authorized Version.

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: ¹I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Ma'ry her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Je'sus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Ma'ry, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

32 Then when Ma'ry was come where Je'sus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Je'sus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and ²was troubled.

Revised Version.

27 I believe thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, ¹even he that cometh into the world.

28 And when she had said this, she went away, and called Ma'ry ²her sister secretly, saying, The ³Master

is here, and calleth thee. And she, when she heard it, arose quickly,

30 and went unto him. (Now Je'sus was not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where

31 Martha met him.) The Jews then which were with her in the house, and were comforting her, when they saw Ma'ry, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going unto the tomb to

32 ⁴weep there. Ma'ry therefore, when she came where Je'sus was, and saw him, fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Je'sus therefore saw her ⁵weeping, and the Jews ⁶also ⁷weeping which came with her, he ⁸groaned in

¹ Matt. 16. 16; chap. 4. 49; 6. 14, 69. — ² He troubled himself.

¹ Or, her sister saying secretly. — ² Or, Teacher. — ³ Or, well. — ⁴ Or, weeping. — ⁵ Or, weeping. — ⁶ Or, was moved with indignation in the spirit.

27. I believe—Literally, *I have believed*. Thou art the Christ—But with the apostles she doubtless shared her countrymen's imperfect views of the character and office of the Messiah.—*Plummer*. Which should come—Literally, *that cometh*. Comp. 6. 14; Matt. 11. 3; Luke 7. 19; Deut. 18. 15.

II. JESUS AND MARY. Verses 28-33.

28, 29, 30. Secretly—Because she knew that some of Christ's enemies were among the guests. Vers. 19, 31. "Secretly" belongs to "saying" not to "called."—*Plummer*. Mary was probably sitting in the chamber of mourning, with its upst chairs and couches, and other melancholy tokens of mourning, as was the custom.—*Eidersheim*. The Master is come—Rather, *the Teacher*. This title opens a glimpse into the private intercourse of the Lord and the disciples. So they spoke of him.—*Vincent*. Into the town—Or, *into the village*. By remaining outside he would be able to say what he wished to say to the sisters without fear of interruption.—*Plummer*.

31, 32. Followed her, saying—For "saying" read with the best authorities, *thinking*. To weep—Rather, *to wait*. It was the practice to visit the grave, especially during the first three days.—*Eidersheim*. Lord, if thou hadst been here—Martha had spoken the same words. Ver. 31. No doubt the sisters had expressed this thought to one another often in the last days. Mary's emotion is too strong for her; she can say no more than this; contrast ver. 22.—*Plummer*.

33. Weeping . . . weeping—This repetition points a contrast which is the key to the passage. He groaned in the spirit—Better, *He was angered in the spirit*. The word translated "groaned" occurs five times in the New Testament; here, ver. 38; Matt. 9. 30; Mark 1. 43; 14. 5. In all cases, as in classical Greek and in the Septuagint, it expresses not sorrow but indignation or severity. What was Jesus angered at? He was indignant at seeing the hypocritical and sentimental lamentations of his enemies, the Jews, mingling with the heartfelt lamentations of his loving friend Mary (comp. 12. 10); hypocrisy ever roused his anger.—*Plummer*. Was troubled—

Authorised Version.	Revised Version.
84 And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. 85 Je'sus 'wept.	84 the spirit, and 'was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. 85 Je'sus wept. The Jews therefore said, Be-
86 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!	86 hold how he loved him! But some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die? Je'sus therefore again 'groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay 'against it.
87 And some of them said, Could not this man, 'which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?	87 Je'sus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he hath been dead four days.
88 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.	88 Je'sus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?
89 Je'sus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he hath been dead four days.	89 Je'sus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou believedst, thou shouldst see the

^a Isa. 55. 2; Luke 19. 41; Rom. 12. 15; Heb. 4. 15.—^b Chap. 9. 6.

^c Gr. *troubled himself*.—^d Or, *being moved with indignation in himself*.—^e Or, *upon*.

The margin is better; He *troubled himself*, that is, agitated himself, probably trembled with agitation.

III. JESUS AND LAZARUS. Verses 34-44.

34, 35. They say unto him—"They" are the sisters. On both sides "grief speaks in the fewest possible words." Jesus wept—Or, *shed tears*, not because he is ignorant or doubtful of what is coming, but because he cannot but sympathize with the intensity of his friends' grief.—*Plummer*. The very gospel in which the Deity of Jesus is most clearly asserted is also that which makes us best acquainted with the profound human side of his life.—*Godet*.

Jesus sympathizes with all who suffer. Ver. 35. See ILLUSTRATIONS. And relieves suffering just as far as relief is good for the sufferers. To-day, in heaven, the sympathies of Jesus are those of our own human nature. He wept because he saw Mary weeping—just as the tears of other eyes bring tears to our own. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He sees every tear that falls, knows every pang of bereavement, and "in his measure feels afresh what every member bears."—*Cowles*.

36, 37. Loved him—The word for "love" here is the more passionate word used in verse 3, by the sisters, not the higher word used in verse 5 by the evangelist.—*Cambridge Bible*.

38, 39, 40. Groaning in himself—See on ver. 33. Their contemptuous unbelief arouses his indignation afresh. To the grave—The having a private burying-place indicates that the family was well off. The large attendance of mourners and the very precious ointment (12. 3) point to the same fact.—*Plummer*. Upon it—The Greek may mean "against it," so that an excavation in the side of the rock or mound is not excluded. What is now shown as the sepulcher of Lazarus is an excavation in the ground with steps down to it. The stone would keep out beasts of prey. Take ye away—The stone was placed over the entrance mainly to guard against wild beasts, and could be easily removed.—*Vincent*. The sister of him that was dead—Not inserted gratuitously. It was because she was his sister that she could not bear to see him or allow him to be seen disfigured by corruption. The remark comes much more naturally from the practical Martha than from the reserved and retiring Mary. There is nothing to indicate that she was mistaken.—*Plummer*. She dared not believe; she dared not disbelieve. Dead four days—It was a common Jewish idea that corruption commenced on the fourth day, that the drop of gall which had fallen from the sword of the angel, and caused death, was then working its effect, and that, as the face changed, the soul took its final leave from the resting-place of the body.—*Edersheim*.

Authorized Version.

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Je'sus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but ¹⁰ because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Laz'a-rus ¹¹ come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and ¹² his face was bound about with a napkin. Je'sus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Revised Version.

41 glory of God? So they took away the stone. And Je'sus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee

42 that thou hearest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude which standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Laz'a-rus,

44 come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with ¹³ grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Je'sus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

¹⁰ Chap. 12. 30.—¹¹ Deut. 32. 35; 1 Sam. 2. 6; Ps. 22. 9; Luke 7. 14; 8. 54; Acts 3. 15; 9. 40; Rom. 4. 17.—¹² Chap. 20. 7.

¹³ Or, *grave-bands*.

41, 42.—Verse 41 is added to prevent misunderstanding; for no one must be left to suppose from this act of thanksgiving that there are many prayers of the Son which the Father does not hear. —*Plummer*. The people—The multitude. A miscellaneous crowd had gathered. John habitually makes a distinction between the *Jews* and the *multitude*.—*M. R. Vincent*. I said it—That is, I said the words "I thank thee."

43, 44. *Cried*.—The Greek word (rare in the New Testament except in this gospel) is nowhere else used of Christ. It is elsewhere used of the shout of a multitude. (12. 13; 18. 40; 19. 6; 12. 15.; (comp. Matt. 12. 19; Acts 22. 23.) This loud cry was perhaps the result of strong emotion, or in order that the whole multitude might hear. It is natural to regard it as the direct means of the miracle, awakening the dead. *Came forth*.—The winding-sheet may have been loosely tied round him, or each limb may have been swathed separately. In Egyptian mummies sometimes every finger is kept distinct. *Grave clothes*.—Swathing bands. The bandages which kept the sheet and the spices round the body. Nothing is said about the usual spices (19. 40) here; and Martha's remark (ver. 39) rather implies that there had been no embalming. If Lazarus died of a malignant disease he would be buried as quickly as possible. Let him go—Lazarus is to be allowed to retire out of the way of harmful excitement and idle curiosity. The imagination alone, says *M. R. Vincent*, follows the sisters with their brother, perchance with Christ, behind the closed door, and hears the sacred interchanges of that wonderful communing. *Tennyson*, with a deep and truly Christian perception, has struck its key-note:

"Her eyes are homes of silent prayer;
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits!
And He that brought him back is there."

Works must be joined with faith. Vers. 39, 44. See ILLUSTRATIONS. A faith sound as that of the Westminster divines will not save us unless it flows out into action.—*Cuyler*. Faith and works are as necessary to our spiritual life as Christians as soul and body are to our natural life as men, for faith is the soul of religion and works the body.—*Colton*.

Jesus as a Friend. It may aid our conception of the value of Jesus as a Friend to ask just here what Martha and Mary must have thought of him as their friend in their great need? They had known him somewhat before; but never before as now. It has been sometimes said that we measure the worth of a friend on this twofold scale: one side graduating the *sympathy* that is born of love; the other the power which is available for help in need. With these standards in our mind, let us think how wonderfully Jesus revealed himself to the sisters in this emergency! Was ever human sympathy more tender and pure than his? What sweet confidence in his love it must have begotten in their bosoms! And then, on the other side, there was power to help—it were idle to wish it were greater. What more can our human weakness ever need? How safe we may feel under

the wing of such a friend! The dear sisters at Bethany will remember these testimonies to the value of such a friend as Jesus to the end of their days. We hope they rendered many a song of thanksgiving all along their after pilgrimage of trials and griefs. And is not their Jesus also our own? as true and quick and tender in his sympathies with us as with them? as mighty to save in our weakness as in theirs?—*Coville*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Faith raises us above trouble. Ver. 22.—Faith lifts the soul into the realm of the invisible, and that man succeeds best who has most of this element. The difference between a merchant prince and a petty trader is that the trader can work only so far as he sees. He must be able to put his hand on cask and box and bale, while the other disdains to stop at things he can handle, but deals with the relations of things, anticipates results, and, taking into account time and space, seasons, races, and latitude, makes the whole earth minister to his need. In affairs of state the man who looks at forms of law is but a politician, while he who comprehends principle and looks forth with clear vision into the future is a statesman. The faith of a Christian takes in the widest sweep and still educes good out of seeming ill.—*Beecher*.

Grecian mythology said that the fountain of Hippocrene was struck out by the foot of the winged horse Pegasus. I have often noticed that the most beautiful fountains of Christian comfort in life are discovered under the iron-shod hoof of disaster and calamity.—*Talmage*.

Jesus sympathizes with all who suffer. Ver. 35.—If a man be found weltering by the road-side, wounded, and a stranger comes along, he will pity him, for the heart of man speaks one language the world over. But if it were a near neighbor or strong personal friend how much more tender the pity. That of the man's own father far transcends those. But the noblest heart on earth is but a trickling stream from a shallow fountain compared with the pity of God, which is wide as the scope of heaven and abundant as all the air.—*Beecher*.

Works must be joined with faith. Vers. 39, 44.—Two gentlemen were crossing a river in a ferry-boat. As they disputed about faith and works the ferry-man interposed by saying "I hold in my hand two oars, faith and work. If I pull only one of these the boat goes round and round, making no progress. I must pull both to reach the landing-place." It is not enough that the inward works of a clock are well constructed and also the dial-plate and hands; the works must regulate the movement of the hands.—*Whateley*.

TEACHING HINTS.

There are three ways in which this lesson may be taught: as a *picture*, a *parable*, or a *prophecy*.

1. Take it as a *picture of Christ*—Here we note the following aspects of the Saviour: 1.) *The interceding One* (ver. 21, 22); the one whose prayers in our behalf avail with God. 2.) *The prophetic One* (vers. 23, 24); promising to us the same resurrection that he promised to the friends of Lazarus. 3.) *The living One* (vers. 25, 26); who has life in himself, not as an endowment, but as an element of his being. 4.) *The anointed One* (ver. 27); the word "Christ" meaning "anointed," and pointing to the mission of Jesus to the world. 5.) *The sympathizing One* (vers. 38-39); who is afflicted in all our affliction. 6.) *The commanding One* (vers. 39-41); whose commands are to be obeyed, even when they seem strange, and contrary to nature. 7.) *The quickening One* (vers. 42-44); who gives life to the dead.

2. Take it as a *parable of salvation*—1.) Lazarus is the type of a world dead in sin. 2.) There is but One who can impart spiritual life, the One who is "the Life." 3.) When Christ comes to give life he enters into fellowship with our sufferings. 4.) Though we cannot give life we can help to give it, by rolling away the stone, and bringing those spiritually dead into relation with Christ. 5.) When Christ calls the soul must obey, and come forth from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

3. Take it as a *prophecy of the resurrection*—1.) Death is universal. 2.) Death is corrupting. 3.) No human power can call the dead from their graves. 4.) Christ can summon the dead, and his voice will reach them in their abode. 5.) There will come a day when the picture of Lazarus rising from his tomb will be repeated in a general resurrection.

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LESSON II.—October 11.

CHRIST FORETELLING HIS DEATH.—JOHN 12. 20-36.

GOLDEN TEXT.—And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.—JOHN 12. 32.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—30 A. D., between the Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem and the Last Supper.

PLACE.—Jerusalem. The closing words of the discourse seem to intimate that they were followed by retirement from public teaching. Not improbably these were among the last words spoken in the temple before the retirement to Bethany, on the evening of what we call Wednesday, April 4. Comp. Luke 22. 37. They were uttered, probably, in the court of the Gentiles, as Jesus passed from the court of the women, which, as the most public place for Jewish assemblies, was the frequent scene of his teaching. On the previous day the court of the Gentiles had been cleansed from the traffic and merchandise which had been customary in it, and the temple had been declared to be “a house of prayer for all nations. The court of the Gentiles was divided from the inner square of the temple by a stone fence, bearing upon pillars, placed at regular distances, the following words in Greek and Latin:

No alien must pass within the fence around the Temple and the Court. If any one be caught doing so, he must blame himself for the death that will follow.

This prohibition was known from Josephus (*Ant.* xv. ii, 5); but in our own day one of the slabs, bearing these exact words, was discovered by M. Ganneau during the excavations of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Comp. Acts 21. 28, and especially Mark 11. 17. The events and the words of these days must have brought strange thoughts to the minds of proselytes—men who were worshippers of the one God by personal conviction, and not because of the faith of their ancestors; and with hearts filled with wonder as to what these things meant—half-grasping, it may be, the truth that this middle wall of partition should be broken down—they ask for a special interview with Jesus. Comp. Eph. 2. 12-22.—Watkins.

THE TOWER OF ANTONIA.



Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
20 And there ¹ were certain Greeks among them ² that came up to worship at the feast:	20 ¹ Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship
21 The same came therefore to Phil'ip, which was of Beth-sa'i-da of Gal'i-lee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Je'sus.	21 at the feast: these therefore came to Phil'ip, which was of Beth-sa'i-da of Gal'i-lee, and asked him, saying, Sir,
22 Phil'ip cometh and telleth An'drew: and again An'drew and Phil'ip tell Jesus.	22 we would see Je'sus. Phil'ip cometh, and telleth An'drew: An'drew cometh, and Phil'ip, and they tell Je'sus.
23 And Je'sus answered them, saying, The ³ hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.	23 And Je'sus answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of
24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ⁴ a corn of wheat fall into the	24 man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain

¹ Acts 17. 4.—² 1 Kings 8. 41; Acts 8. 97.—³ Chap. 12. 22; 17. 1.—⁴ 1 Cor. 15. 26; Heb. 2. 10; 1 John 4. 14; Rev. 5. 9.

I. THE SEEKERS.—Verses 20-26.

20, 21, 22. *Certain Greeks*—*Hellenes*, that is, born Gentiles. These Greeks had doubtless become Jewish proselytes. Many thoughtful men, sick of the vanities of heathenism, were now turning toward Jerusalem, with yearnings for a deeper spiritual life. The *Hellenes* alluded to here, in John 7. 35, and frequently in the Acts and Paul's epistles, must be carefully distinguished from the *Hellenists*, mentioned in Acts 6. 1 and 9. 29. These latter were foreign-born Jews, who spoke Greek and not Aramaic, but the men mentioned here were Gentiles. *That came up to worship*—Better, *that were wont to go up to worship*. The feast—The passover. How little they dreamt that they were on the very verge of the fulfillment of the sacred rites they had come up to perform. To Philip—Philip's character is only revealed by glimpses; but it is evident that he was a prosaic, matter-of-fact man. See 1. 46 and 14. 8. It is idle to conjecture why the Greeks came to him. His name was Greek. Sir—They approach him with great respect. Comp. 4. 11, 15, 19. *We would see Jesus*—These men from the West at the close of Christ's life set forth the same truth as the men from the East at the beginning of it—that the Gentiles are to be gathered in. The wise men came to his cradle, these to his cross, of which their coming reminds him; for only by his death could "the nations" be saved.—*Plummer*. Dr. *Leonard Bacon* has very ingeniously pressed the theory that these Greeks came, as representative men, to formally invite Jesus to leave Jewry, where his mission had seemed to be a failure, and to preach his doctrine of love and self-sacrifice to the inquiring Gentile world, which they believed would warmly welcome him. This is a fascinating theory, and explains many strange features in this narrative: the hesitancy of Philip; the implied importance of an errand that brought Andrew and Philip together to Jesus; and, most of all, the tone of majestic solemnity in which Christ uttered his "answer." It sheds a new and beautiful light on the entire incident. But it is only a theory. *Telleth Andrew*—Another apostle with a Greek name. They were both of Bethsaida (1. 44), and possibly these Greeks may have come from the same district. Philip, shrinking from the responsibility of introducing Gentiles to the Messiah, applies in his difficulty to the apostle who had already distinguished himself by bringing others to Christ (1. 41; 6. 8, 9).—*Plummer*.

The soul thirsts for God, its true portion. Vers. 20, 21. A great thinker has said, "Give a man half a universe, and he will at once quarrel with the holder of the other half. What he needs is God's infinite universe all to himself." An infinite universe would not do. There is that in man which the knowledge of the living God only can satisfy.

We should not only be Christ's, but try to lead others to him. Ver. 22. Bestow personal service if you cannot give gold. Teach children if you cannot instruct men. Be a lamp in the chamber if you cannot be a star in the sky. Gladden the circle of home if you cannot illumine the town. Talk to the few if you cannot preach to the crowd.—*Coley*. The humblest work often brings the largest results.

23, 24, 25, 26. And Jesus answered.—Better, *but Jesus answered*. Except a corn of wheat . . . die—Strange as it may seem to you that the Messiah should die, yet this is but the

Authorized Version.

ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He 'that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and 'where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honor.

27 Now 'is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: 'but for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. Then 'came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

29 The people therefore that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

Revised Version.

of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that

25 loveth his 'life loseth it; and he that hateth his 'life in this world shall

26 keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will

27 the Father honor. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this 'hour. But for this cause came I unto this

28 hour. Father, glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified

29 it, and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath

¹ Luke 9. 24; Luke 17. 33.—² Thoma. 4. 17.—³ Luke 12. 50; chap. 12. 21.—⁴ Luke 22. 33.—⁵ 2 Pet. 1. 17.

¹ Or, soul.—² Or, soul.—³ Or, hour?

course of nature: a seed cannot be glorified unless it die. A higher form of existence is obtained only through the extinction of the lower form that preceded it. *Loveth his life . . . hateth his life . . . life eternal*—"Life" is here used in two senses, and in the Greek two different words are used. In the first two cases "life" means the life of the individual, in the last, life in the abstract. By sacrificing life in the one sense we may win life in the other. See Matt. 10. 39; 16. 25; Mark 8. 35; Luke 9. 24; 17. 33. A comparison of the texts will show that most of them refer to different occasions, so that this solemn warning must have been often on his lips. The present utterance is distinct from all the rest. "Hateth" means, is ready to act toward it as if he hated it, if need so require. Neither here nor in Luke 14. 26 must "hate" be watered down to mean "be not too fond of;" it means that and a great deal more. Let him follow me—In my life of self-sacrifice; Christ himself has set the example of hating one's life in this world. Where I am—Wherever I am, in all future felicity, there shall also my servant be.—*Plummer*.

Self-denyng service is the path to glory. Vers. 24-26. See ILLUSTRATIONS. These verses and the following show, what is too often forgotten, that the agony of Christ was not confined to the garden, but was part of his whole life. The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord. In the world we shall have tribulation, but he has overcome the world.

II. THE VOICE. Verses 27-31.

27, 28, 29. Now is my soul troubled—Rather, *has been and still is*. The word rendered "soul" is the same as that rendered "life" in "loveth his life" and "hateth his life." To bring out this and the sequence of thought, "life" would perhaps be better here. "He that would serve me must follow me and be ready to hate his life; for my life has long since been tossed and torn with emotion and sorrow." What shall I say?—Rather, *what must I say?* This appears to be the best punctuation; and the question expresses the difficulty of framing a prayer under the conflicting influences of fear of death and willingness to glorify his Father by dying. The result is first a prayer under the influence of fear—"save me from this hour" (comp. "Let this cup pass from me" Matt. 26. 39), and then a prayer under the influence of ready obedience—"Glorify thy name" through my sufferings. But the Greek means "save me out of" that is, "bring me safe out of," rather than "save me from," that is, "keep me altogether away from" as in "deliver us from the evil." Matt. 6. 13.—*Plummer*. Then came there a voice—Better, *there came therefore*, that is, in answer to Christ's prayer. There can be no doubt what John wishes us to understand: that a voice was heard speaking articulate words, that some could

Authorized Version.

30 Je'sus answered and said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall "the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw "all men unto me.

33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

34 The people answered him, We "have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

35 Then Je'sus said unto them, Yet a

Revised Version.

30 spoken to him. Je'sus answered and said, This voice hath not come for

31 my sake, but for your sakes. Now is 'the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast

32 out. And I, if I be lifted up * from the earth, will draw all men unto my-

33 self. But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

34 The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is Son of

35 man? Jesus therefore said unto

³⁰ Chap. 11, 42.—³¹ Luke 10, 18; chap. 14, 20; 16, 11; Acts 26, 18; 1 Cor. 4, 4; Eph. 2, 3; 2, 12; 1 John 2, 8.—³² Rom. 8, 18; Heb. 2, 9.—³³ 2 Sam. 7, 13; Psa. 89, 26; 110, 4; Isa. 9, 7; Eccl. 37, 25; Dan. 2, 44; Mic. 4, 1.

* Or, a judgment.—5 Or, out of.

distinguish the words, others could not; while some mistook the sounds for thunder. To make the thunder the reality, and the voice and the words mere imagination, is to substitute an arbitrary explanation for the evangelist's plain meaning.

30, 31. Jesus answered—He answered their discussions about the sound, and by calling it a voice he decides conclusively against those who supposed it to be thunder; but those who recognized that it was a voice were scarcely less seriously mistaken; *their* error consisted in not recognizing that the voice had a meaning for *them*. *Not for my sake hath this voice come, but for your sakes*; that is, that ye might believe. Comp. 11. 42. Now . . . now—With prophetic certainty Christ speaks of the victory as already won.—*Plummer*. The prince of this world—Literally, *the ruler of this world*. In the Rabbinical writings "prince of this world" was a common designation of Satan, as ruler of the Gentiles, in opposition to God, the head of the Jewish theocracy. But just as the Messiah is the Saviour of the believing world, whether Jew or Gentile, so Satan is the ruler of the unbelieving world, whether Gentile or Jew.

III. THE CROSS. Verses 32-36.

32, 33. Be lifted up—Raised up to heaven by means of the cross; we need not, as in 3. 14 and 8. 28, confine the meaning to the crucifixion, although the lifting up on the cross may be specially indicated. The words "from the earth" (literally, *out of the earth*) seem to point to the ascension; yet the cross itself, apparently so repulsive, has through Christ's death become an attraction; and this *may* be the meaning here.—*Plummer*.

Christ is the center of humanity. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

34. Out of the law—In its widest sense, including the Psalms and the prophets. Comp. Psa. 89, 26; 110, 4; Isa. 9, 6; Ezek. 37, 25; Dan. 7, 13, 14. The people rightly understand "lifted up from the earth" to mean removal from the earth by death; and they argue: "Scripture says that *the* Christ (see on 1. 20) will abide forever. You claim to be the Christ, and yet you say that you will be lifted up, and therefore *not* abide."—*Plummer*. Who is this Son of man—"This" is contemptuous; "a strange Messiah this, with no power to abide." Here we have the secret, unexplained by the Synoptists, why, even when the scale is seeming to turn for a moment in favor of belief, it is continually swayed down again by the discovery of some new particular in which the current ideas respecting the Messiah are disappointed and contradicted.—*Sanday*. One moment the people are convinced by a miracle that Jesus is the Messiah, the next that it is impossible to reconcile his position with the received interpretations of Messianic prophecy. It never occurred to them to doubt the interpretations.—*Plummer*. This question came midway between the "Hosanna!" of the entry into Jerusalem and the "Crucify him!" of the trial. Comp. Matt. 27, 20.—*Watkins*.

35, 36. Then Jesus said—Better, *Jesus therefore said*. He gives no answer to their con-

Authorized Version.

little while ¹⁴is the light with you.
¹⁵Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for ¹⁶he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

³⁶ While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the ¹⁷children of light. These things spake Je'sus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Revised Version.

them, Yet a little while is the light 'among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light.

These things spake Je'sus, and he departed and ¹hid himself from them.

¹⁴ Isa. 45. 6; chap. 1. 9; R. 19; 9. 5.—¹⁵ Jer. 13. 16; Eph. 5. 8. ¹⁶ Chap. 11. 10; 1 John 2. 11.—¹⁷ Luke 16. 8; Eph. 5. 8; 1 Thess. 5. 5; 1 John 2. 9-11.

Or, he.—¹ Or, was hidden from them.

temptuous question, but replies by a solemn warning.—*Plummer*. While ye have—The better reading is, *According as ye have*. Recognize that the Light of the world is with you and act accordingly. See 9. 4; 11. 9; 8. 12; Rom. 1. 21. Come upon you—*Overtake you*, or *suddenly find you out*. See 1. Thess. 5. 4; Num. 32. 23. Children of light—Or, *sons of light*. See Luke 10. 6 and 16. 8; Eph. 5. 8. The believer will become like unto him in whom he believed—a thought that took hold powerfully on John.—*Watkins*. And departed—Probably to Bethany. Comp. Matt. 21. 17; Mark. 11. 11; Luke 21. 37.

We are only safe when we walk in the light. Ver. 35. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Self-denying service is the path to glory. Vers. 24-26.—Dr. Judson finding that his love of neatness interfered with his labors among the filthy Karens, he vanquished this repugnance by nursing those sick of the most loathsome diseases. Finding his love of fame not extinguished he threw into the fire every document which could contribute to his posthumous renown. He threw his patrimonial estate into the funds of the mission, and lived in a hut on the edge of the jungle, that he might do good, hoping for nothing again.—*Hamilton*.

At a large dinner party given by Lord Stratford after the Crimean War, it was proposed that every one should write on a slip of paper the name which appeared most likely to descend to posterity with renown. When the papers were opened every one of them contained the name of *Miss Nightingale*!

Christ is the center of humanity. Ver. 32.—Among the several wonders of the loadstone this is not the least, that it will not draw gold or pearl, but, despising these, draws iron—one of the inferior metals—to it. So Christ leaves the angels and comes to a poor, sinful man, that he may draw him into his embrace.—*Watson*.

When Alfred Cookman was dying a smile rested on his face while he said: "Jesus is drawing me closer and closer to his great heart of infinite love. His attraction lifts high as the heavens, and extends as wide as the entire human family."

Jesus Christ is a new starting-point for the race. In the year 1 of our era the world was lying numb, bound hand and foot, in dense darkness; before the year 50 there are magnificent outbursts of fresh life. God in our nature is the creator of modern history. It was not enough to give the world an impulse two millenniums ago and then leave it. He is an irresistible abiding presence in modern society. In ancient history God was coming down to earth; in modern, man is going up to heaven.—*Jones*.

We are only safe when we walk in the light. Ver. 35.—If a man whose body was radiant and bright as the sun were walking through a land of Egyptian darkness all who followed him would walk in the light, and the closer they kept to him the clearer their road. Light streams from Christ upon the road we are to go.—*Bowen*.

TEACHING HINTS.

There is a long interval in the life of Christ between Lessons I and II, which should be filled in by a brief statement of connecting events, as the retirement to Ephraim, the journey in Perea, the visit to Jericho, and the anointing at Bethany.

The incidents of this lesson took place on the last day of the Saviour's public teaching. Describe the scene in the temple and the events of the day.

The Golden Text suggests an appropriate theme of teaching. We may arrange the thoughts as follows:

1. **Christ draws men out of all nations.** Vers. 20, 21. These Greeks were the first fruits of a mighty harvest of the Gentile world. Their request is the cry of many hearts, "We would see Jesus." There is in every nature a yearning which only Jesus can satisfy.

2. **Though men are drawn, they must be brought to Christ.** Ver. 23. There is still work for the Andrews and Phillips in leading men to Jesus.

3. **Christ draws men by his death.** Vers. 23, 24. It is the crucified Christ that produces fruit among the nations. Had he lived, he would have remained alone; he died, and a harvest of souls sprang up.

4. **By his death Christ draws men to follow the example of his life.** Vers. 25, 26. Until Christ came, the ideal life was the life for self. Since Jesus died a new and higher conception of the noblest life has arisen. Men and women by the thousand are now willing to live for others. And this is the life of true success.

5. **The heart may shrink from this life, yet it will glorify God and win glory to the one who lives it.** Vers. 27-33. There were hours when the human nature of Christ was troubled as he confronted his cross. Yet his will was firm, and he saw in the cross God's glory and the good of men. So shall it also be with us in our own crosses.

6. **The Christ-life is the life of light.** Vers. 34-36. He who follows Christ by faith walks in the light, for the rays of the Sun of Righteousness fall on his path. This life of self-denial, of doing good, of glorifying God, is the life of liberty and peace.

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LESSON III.—October 18.

WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.—JOHN 13. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—
Phil. 2. 5.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Thursday evening of Passion Week; the beginning of Nisan 14; April 5, A. D. 30.

PLACE.—In the upper room in Jerusalem, where the "last supper" was eaten.

Authorized Version.

1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Je'sus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And supper being ended, ' the devil having now put into the heart of Ju'das Is-car'i-ot, Simon's son, to betray him;

3 Je'sus knowing 'that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He 'riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

Revised Version.

1 Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them 'unto the end.

2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Ju'das Is-car'i-ot, Simon's son, to betray him,

3 Je'sus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and

4 goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

¹ Luke 22. 3. —² Chap. 3. 25; 17. 9; Acts 2. 26; 1 Cor. 15. 27; Heb. 2. 6. —³ Luke 22. 27.

¹ Or, to the uttermost.

I. THE MIND OF CHRIST. Verses 1-11.

1. Now before the feast of the passover—These words give a date not to any one word in the verse, whether "knew," or "having loved," or "loved," but to the narrative which follows. Their most natural meaning is that some evening before the passover Jesus was at supper with his disciples. This was probably Thursday evening, the beginning of Nisan 14.—*Plummer*. When Jesus knew that his hour was come—Rather, *because he knew*. Comp. chaps. 2. 4; 7. 6; 11. 9. Up to this date he had foiled his plotting enemies, and pursued a "line of policy" which was inscrutable to his disciples "because his hour *had not yet come*." That he should depart—Literally, *in order that he should*; that is, the departure was of God's set purpose. His own—Comp. 1. 11, 12; 17. 11; Acts 4. 23; 24. 28. Unto the end—To the uttermost.

Christ has an unchanging love for us. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Not John, nor Lazarus, nor Mary was more fondly loved by him than are you. Not Zaccheus, nor the Samaritan woman, nor any other Hebrew outcast was more tenderly cared for than are the worst sinners of our day. His divine and human affections cling about us.

2. Supper being ended—This is an incorrect reading. It should be either "supper having begun," or "when supper was at hand," or "when supper was beginning." Supper was not yet ended. Ver. 26. The true reading of the rest of this verse is: *The devil having now put it into the heart that Judas, Simon's son, Iecariot, should betray him*.

3. The Father had given all things—Comp. Eph. 1. 22; Phil. 2. 9-11. And went to God—Better, *and goeth to God*.

4, 5. He riseth from supper, etc.—Mark the details of this story. This is the realism of history indeed. The carefulness with which here, as in the account of the cleansing of the temple,



“JESUS KNEW THAT HIS HOUR WAS COME.”

Authorized Version.

5 After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Si'mon Pe'ter: and Pe'ter saith unto him, Lord, 'dost thou wash my feet?

7 Je'sus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Pe'ter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Je'sus answered him, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Si'mon Pe'ter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

10 Je'sus saith to him, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet,

Revised Version.

5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the

6 towel wherewith he was girded. So he cometh to Si'mon Pe'ter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash

7 my feet? Je'sus answered and said: unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand:

8 hereafter. Pe'ter saith unto him. Thou shalt never wash my feet. Je'sus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Si'mon Pe'ter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands

10 and *my* head. Je'sus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not ² save

^a He.—¹ Matt. 2. 14.—² Ps. 51. 2, 7; Is. 52. 15; Ezek. 36. 25; Mark 16. 15; chap. 2. 5; Acts 2. 38; 22. 16; 1 Cor. 6. 11; Epi. 4. 32; Tit. 2. 5; Heb. 9. 13, 14; 10. 22.—³ 1 Thess. 5. 23

² Some ancient authorities omit *save*, and *his* feet.

the successive stages in the action are described, proclaim the eye-witness. It was the custom for slaves to wash the feet of the guests before sitting down to meat; and we are tempted to suppose that the symbolical act which our evangelist relates here took the place of this custom.—*Sunday*. His garments—Or, *his upper garments*, which would impede his movements. Into a basin—Better, *into the basin*, which stood there for such purposes; the large copper basin commonly found in Oriental houses. He began to wash, but was interrupted by the incident with Peter.—*Plummer*.

Humility is one mark of the Christian. Ver. 5. See ILLUSTRATIONS. If the fourteenth verse of this lesson were devoutly read every day in every Christian household there would be no church quarrels in Christendom.

7. What I do, etc.—Read: "What I am doing, *thou* knowest not just now, but thou shalt recognize presently."

At best our knowledge of God's designs is fragmentary. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

8. To reject Christ's self-humiliating love because it humiliates him (a well-meaning but false principle), is to cut one's self off from him. It requires much more humility to accept a benefit which is a serious loss to the giver than one which costs him nothing. In this also the surrender of self is necessary.—*Plummer*. The negative form of expression here is the strongest possible, "Thou shalt certainly not wash my feet forever."

Submission first, discipleship after! See ILLUSTRATIONS. The natural heart "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This is as true of the amiable and moral as of the outcast. What is called "good nature" is not Christianity. "Come, follow me," is the Master's call. Submit, and all riches, grace, and happiness follow.

9. Not my feet only—The impetuosity which is so marked a characteristic of Peter in the first three gospels (comp. especially Luke 5. 8 and Matt. 16. 22) comes out very strongly in his three utterances here.—*Plummer*.

10. He that is washed—Rather, *he that is bathed needeth only to wash his feet*. Comp. Heb. 10. 22 and 2 Pet. 2. 22. In the Greek we have quite a different word from the one rendered "wash" elsewhere in these verses; the latter means to wash part of the body, this to bathe the whole person. A man who has bathed does not need to bathe again when he reaches home, but only to wash the dust off his feet; then he is wholly clean. So also in the spiritual life. Peter, conscious of his own imperfections, in Luke 5. 8, and possibly here, rushes to the conclusion that he is utterly unclean. But his meaning here perhaps rather is—"If having part in thee depends on

Authorised Version.
but is clean every whit: and 'ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

Revised Version.
to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know

ye what I have done to you? Ye call me, 'Master, and Lord: and ye say

14 well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the 'Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one

15 another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as

16 I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, A 'servant is not

greater than his lord; neither 'one that is sent greater than he that sent

17 him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.

⁷ Chap. 15. 3.—⁸ Luke 6. 44; 1 Cor. 8. 6; 12. 8; Phil. 2. 11.—
⁹ Luke 22. 27.—¹⁰ Rom. 12. 19; Gal. 6. 1; 1 Pet. 2. 5.—
¹¹ Phil. 2. 5; 1 Pet. 2. 21; 1 John 2. 6.—¹² Luke 6. 40; chap. 13. 30.—¹³ Jas. 1. 25.

³ Or, re-fined.—⁴ Or, Teacher.—⁵ Or, Teacher.—⁶ Or, bond-servant.—⁷ Or, an apostle.

being washed by thee, wash all thou canst." Peter excellently illustrates Christ's saying. His love for his Master proves that he had bathed; his boastfulness (ver. 37), his attack on Malchus (18. 10), his denials (25, 27), his dissimulation at Antioch (Gal. 2), all show how often he had need to wash.—*Plummer*. But not all—A sad allusion to the presence of a traitor.

II. CHRIST'S MIND IN US. Verses 12-17.

12. **Know ye**—Do you recognize the meaning of it?

13. **Master and Lord**—Or, *the (Teacher) and the Lord*. Titles of respect paid to a rabbi.

14. **Ye also ought to wash one another's feet**—The command plainly means, you should be ready and eager to bless and accommodate all, especially "the household of faith." This passage, and 1 Tim. 5. 10, where "washing the saints' feet, is alluded to apparently as a type of devoted charity, have led superstitious people occasionally to elevate "foot washing" into a religious ceremony. Christ does not require his *act* on this occasion to be duplicated, but his *spirit*.

15. **As I have done to you**—Not, "*what* I have done to you," but "*even as* I have done;" this is the spirit in which to act—self-sacrificing humility—whether or no it be exhibited precisely in this way. Mutual service, and especially mutual cleansing, is the obligation of Christ's disciples. Comp. Jas. 5. 16.—*Plummer*.

We are to follow in Christ's steps. Vers. 14, 15. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

16. **The servant is not greater than his lord**—This saying occurs four times in the gospels, each time in a different connection: (1) To show that the disciples must expect no better treatment than their Master (Matt. 10. 24); (2) to impress the apostles with their responsibilities as teachers, for their disciples will be as they are (Luke 6. 40); (3) here; (4) with the same purpose as in Matt. 10. 24, but on another occasion (15. 20). We infer that it was one of Christ's frequent sayings; it is introduced here with the double "verily" as of special importance.—*Plummer*. **He that is sent**—An apostle (*apostolos*).

17. **Happy are ye if ye do them**—Better, *blessed are ye*, etc. It is the same Greek word as is used in 20. 29 and in the Beatitudes both in Matthew and in Luke. Comp. Luke 11, 28; 12. 43; Matt. 11. 6; Rev. 1. 3.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Christ has an unchanging love for us. Ver. 1.—A noble rolling river has been flowing on for six thousand years watering the fields and slaking the thirst of a hundred generations, yet shows no signs of waste. The sun has melted the snows of so many winters, renewed the verdure of so many springs, painted the flowers of so many summers, and ripened the golden harvests of so many autumns, yet shines as brilliant as ever, his floods of light none the less full for centuries of boundless profusion. Yet these are but faint images of Christ's love. For when the judgment flames have licked up that flowing stream and the light of that glorious sun shall be quenched in darkness his love shall flow on throughout eternity.—*Guthrie*.

I know a mother who has an idiot child. For it she gave up all society, almost every thing, and devoted her whole life to it. "And now," said she, "for fourteen years I have tended it and loved it and it does not even know me." Amid all discouragements Christ's love is patient and unwearying.—*Moody*.

A member of Mr. Sankey's singing-class said to him when she was dying: "One Thursday when you were teaching us to sing 'I am so glad that Jesus loves me,' you told us that if we only gave our hearts to him he would love us; I gave mine to him, and he loves me." "What that dying girl said to me," said he, "cheered me more than any thing I ever heard, because she was my first convert."

Humility is one mark of the Christian. Ver. 5.—Of all trees God hath chosen the vine, a low plant that creeps upon the wall; of all beasts the patient lamb; of all fowls the mild dove. Christ is the lily of the valley. When God appeared to Moses it was not in the lofty cedar, nor sturdy oak, nor spreading plane, but in an abject shrub, to thus check the conceited arrogance of man.—*Fellham*.

As the lark that soars highest builds her nest the lowest; the nightingale that sings the sweetest sings in the shade; the branches most laden with ripe fruit bend lowest, and the ship most laden sinks deepest in the water, so the holiest Christians are the humblest.—*Mason*.

St. Augustine being asked, "What is the first thing in religion?" replied, "Humility;" and what the second? "Humility;" and what the third? "Humility." "He who has other graces without it is like one who carries a box of precious powder without a cover on a windy day."

"I have just read a large volume of autobiographies. Two of the characters agreed *they were never happy till they ceased striving to be great men.*"—*Payson*.

At best our knowledge of God's designs is fragmentary. Ver. 7.—If we could know as much as we desire it would probably make us insane. We have seen gardeners pull down the awnings in their greenhouses. Plants may sometimes have too much sun, and so may we.—*Adams*.

We are like a man who, confined in a dark room, should observe, through a chink of the wall, some large animal passing by; he sees but an extremely narrow strip of the object at once as it passes by, and is utterly unable to form an idea of the size and shape of it.—*Foster*.

A traveler as he passed through a large and thick wood saw a part of a huge oak which appeared misshapen and seemed to spoil the scenery. "If," said he, "I was the owner I would cut down that tree." But when he had ascended the hill and taken a full view of the forest this same tree appeared the most beautiful part of the landscape. One day we are to have clearer vision of life's mysteries.—*Olin*.

Submission first, discipleship after! Ver. 8.—When the people of Collatia stipulated about their surrender to the protection of Rome, the question was asked, "Do you deliver up yourselves, your city, fields, water, temples, utensils—all things that are yours, both human and divine, into the hands of the people of Rome?" And on their replying, "We deliver up all," they were received.—*Harris*.

A French officer, whose ship had been captured by the English, advanced toward Nelson and offered him his hand. "*First give me your sword,*" said the admiral.

When Henry VIII. had determined to make himself head of the English Church, he insisted that the convocation should accept this without any modifying clause. Refusing to compromise he vowed "he would have no *tantrums*." Sometimes a sinner would fain amend the humiliating

terms of grace, but there is no help for it. Jesus must be all; the sinner nothing. The heart must without reserve submit to the sovereignty of the Redeemer.—*Spurgeon*.

Freeborn Garretson, when riding through a lonely wood, was so overpowered with a sense of sin that he dismounted to pray. He prayed for forbearance that he might delay in seeking Christ. Resuming his ride his agony became more intense. "I threw," he says, "the rein of my bridle on the horse's neck and cried out, 'Lord, I submit.' The enmity of my heart was slain, and I was so happy I wanted wings to fly away to heaven."—*Stevens*.

We are to follow in Christ's steps. Vers. 14, 15.—We were examining Guido's "Aurora," and as we sat behind the row of artists busily copying the famous painting, noticing how they differed from each other as well as from the immortal fresco, we called the attention of our guide to the fact that each of the painters had a different color for the horses and that no two copies were at all alike. With an expressive gesture, he replied, "*Don't look at them, look at the original.*"

TEACHING HINTS.

The events of the last lesson took place on Tuesday of Passion Week. Nothing has been recorded of Wednesday; it was probably passed in retirement and meditation. We come now to Thursday evening, the supper-room, and the feast of the passover.

In relating the story of the lesson, let the following lessons be taught:

1. **The lesson of love to men.** Vers. 1, 2. Jesus loved men, even when the shadow of death was upon him; in the free foreknowledge of the awful scenes that were impending; with the foreknowledge, too, of his disciples' unfaithfulness and weakness. He loved men, even when men forsook him.

2. **The lesson of humility.** Vers. 3-5. He knew that he was the Son of God, yet he was willing to do lowly service for men. Let us be like him in denying ourselves for the good of others.

3. **The lesson of cleansing.** Vers. 6-10. By the feet-washing, Jesus would show us that, even after our sins have been taken away, we need a daily purifying from the evil which touches, while we are on the earth.

4. **The lesson of obedience.** Vers. 11-13. We must learn to submit to the will of Christ even when we do not understand the reason of his dealings with us.

5. **The lesson of mutual service.** Vers. 14-16. Like our Master, we should think, not "How can I gain from others?" but "What can I do for others?"

6. **The lesson of joy in service.** Ver. 17. There is a happiness to the soul which lives for others that is unknown by those who live for themselves. This, the joy of Christ, may be the joy of his followers.

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LESSON IV.—October 25.

CHRIST COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES.—JOHN 14. 1-3, 15-27.

GOLDEN TEXT.—I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.—John 14. 16.

TIME AND PLACE.—Same as last lesson.

Authorized Version.

1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. ¹I go to prepare a place for you.3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, ²I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Revised Version.

1 Let not your heart be troubled:

¹ye believe in God, believe also in

2 me. In my Father's house are many

²mansions; if it were not so, I would

have told you; for I go to prepare a

3 place for you. And if I go and pre-

pare a place for you, I come again,

and will receive you unto myself;

that where I am, there ye may be also.

15 If ye love me, ye will keep my

¹ 2 Cor. 1. 1.—² Chap. 13. 23.—³ Acts 1. 11.—⁴ Chap. 12. 26; 17. 24; 1 Thess. 4. 17.—⁵ 1 John 5. 3.¹ Or, *abide in God*.—² Or, *abiding-places*.

I. THE MANY MANSIONS. Verses 1-3.

1. **Let not your heart be troubled**—There had been much to cause anxiety and alarm; the denouncing of the traitor, the declaration of Christ's approaching departure, the prediction of Peter's denial. The last, as being nearest, might seem to be specially indicated; but what follows shows that "Let not your heart be troubled" refers primarily to "Whither I go, ye cannot come" (13. 33). **Ye believe in God, believe also**—The Greek for "ye believe" and "believe" is the same, and there is nothing to indicate that one is indicative and the other imperative. Both may be indicative; but probably both are imperative: *Trust in God, and trust in me*.—*Plummer*. The Saviour had himself been profoundly troubled (13. 21; 12. 27), but now employs his moments of divine calm to sustain the hearts of his followers.—*Whedon*.

2. **In my Father's house**—Heaven. Comp. "The Lord's throne is in heaven" (Psa. 11. 4); "Our Father, which art in heaven," Matt. 6. 9. **Are many mansions**—Nothing is said about mansions differing in dignity and beauty. There may be degrees of happiness hereafter, but such are neither expressed nor implied here. What is said is that there are "*many mansions*;" there is room enough for all.—*Plummer*. If it were not so, I would have told you—Christ appeals to his fairness: would he have invited them to a place in which there was not room for all? **I go to prepare**—For I go, etc. This proves that there will be room for all.

3. **If I go . . . I will come**—There is no doubt about the meaning of the going away; but the coming again may have various meanings, and apparently not always the same one throughout this discourse; either the resurrection, or the gift of the Paraclete, or the death of individuals, or the presence of Christ in his Church, or the second advent at the last day.—*Plummer*.

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. See ILLUSTRATIONS. This phrase is worn almost thread-bare; but the truth is of ever fresh importance. Let no scholar leave your class without being deeply impressed by it.

II. THE ABIDING COMFORTER. Verses 15-27.

15. **If ye love me, etc.**—A heart filled with that love to Jesus which lives actively for him is the proper temple for the indwelling spirit. Loving obedience is the fitting preparation for the promised gift.—*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*.

Love leads to obedience. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
16 And I will pray the Father, and *he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;	16 commandments. And I will *pray the Father, and he shall give you another *Comforter, that he may be
17 <i>Euen</i> *the Spirit of truth; whom *the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, *and shall be in you.	17 with you forever, <i>even</i> the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot re- ceive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be
18 I will not leave you *comfortless: I will come to you.	18 in you. I will not leave you *deso-
19 Yet a little while, and the world	19 late: I come unto you. Yet a little

* Rom. 8. 15.—† 1 John 2. 1; 4. 6.—‡ Rom. 8. 7; 1 Cor.
2. 14.—§ 1 John 2. 27.—|| Or, orphans.

§ Or, *make request of*.—† Or, *Advocate*; Or, *Helper*; Or,
Paraclite.—|| Or, *orphans*.

16. **Another Comforter**—Better, *another Advocate*. The Greek word *Paraclete* is employed five times in the New Testament: four times in this gospel, by Christ of the Holy Spirit (14. 16, 26; 15. 26; 16. 7), once in the First Epistle by John, of Christ (2. 1). Our translators render it "Comforter" in the gospel, and "Advocate" in the epistle. As to the meaning of the word, usage appears to be decisive. It commonly signifies "one who is summoned to the side of another" to aid him in a court of justice, especially the "court for the defense." It is *passive*, not active; "one who is summoned to plead a cause," not "one who exhorts, or encourages, or comforts." The rendering "Comforter" has arisen from giving the word an active sense, which it cannot have. Moreover, "Advocate" is the sense which the context suggests wherever the word is used in the gospel. The idea of pleading, arguing, convincing, instructing, is prominent in every instance. Here the Paraclete is the "Spirit of truth," whose reasonings fall dead on the ear of the world, and are taken in by the faithful. In 10. 26 he is to *teach* and *remind* them. In 15. 26 he is to *bear witness* to Christ. In 16. 7-11 he is to *convince* or *convict* the world. In short, he is represented as the Advocate, the Counsel, who suggests true reasonings to our minds and true courses for our lives, convicts our adversary the world of wrong, and pleads our cause before God our Father. In the *Te Deum* the Holy Spirit is rightly called "the Comforter," but that is not the function which is set forth here. To substitute "Advocate" will not only bring out the right meaning in the gospel, but will bring the language of the gospel into its true relation to the language of the epistle. He will give you another Advocate acquires fresh meaning when we remember that John calls Christ our "Advocate:" the advocacy of Christ and the advocacy of the Spirit mutually illustrating one another.—*Lightfoot*.

The Holy Ghost supplies to us the place of Christ's personal presence. Vers. 16, 26. See ILLUSTRATIONS. "No one could become a true Christian without the aid of the Holy Spirit any more than a bud could become a blossom without the influence of the sun."

17. **The Spirit of truth**—This expression confirms the rendering "Advocate." Truth is much more closely connected with the idea of advocating a cause than with that of comforting. Comp. 15. 26; 16. 13; 1 John 5. 6. The Paraclete is the Spirit of truth as being the bearer of the divine revelation, bringing truth home to the hearts of men. In 1 John 4. 6 it is opposed to the "spirit of error." Comp. 1 Cor. 2. 12. It *seeth* him not—Because the Spirit and "the things of the Spirit" must be "spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2. 14. The world may have intelligence, scientific investigation, criticism, learning; but not by these means is the Spirit of truth contemplated and recognized; rather by humility, self-investigation, faith, and love.—*Plummer*.

18. **Comfortless**—Rather, *fatherless*, as the word is translated Jas. 1. 27, the only other place in the New Testament where it occurs; or (with the margin) *orphans*, the very word used in the Greek. The inaccurate rendering "comfortless" gives unreal support to the inaccurate rendering "Comforter." In the Greek there is no connection between orphans and Paraclete. We must connect this rather with the tender address in 13. 33; he will not leave his "little children" fatherless.—*Plummer*. I will come to you—By sending the Spirit to fill the place of his own presence.—*Cowles*.

19. **A little while**—Comp. 12. 33; 16. 16. But ye see me—In the Paraclete, ever present

Authorized Version.

seeth me no more; but ¹⁰ye see me:
¹¹because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that ¹²I
 am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in
 you.

21 He ¹³that hath my commandments,
 and keepeth them, he it is that loveth
 me: and he that loveth me shall be
 loved of my Father, and I will love him,
 and will manifest myself to him.

22 Ju'das saith unto him, not Is-car'-
 i-ot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt
 manifest thyself unto us, and not unto
 the world?

23 Je'sus answered and said unto him,
 If a man love me, he will keep my words:
 and my Father will love him, ¹⁴and we
 will come unto him, and make our abode
 with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not
 my sayings: and ¹⁵the word which ye
 hear is not mine, but the Father's which
 sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto
 you, being yet present with you.

26 But ¹⁶the Comforter, *which is* the
 Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send
 in my name, ¹⁷he shall teach you all

Revised Version.

while, and the world beholdeth me
 no more; but ye behold me: because

20 I live, ¹⁰ye shall live also. In that
 day ye shall know that I am in my
 Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and
 keepeth them, he it is that loveth
 me: and he that loveth me shall be
 loved of my Father, and I will love
 him, and will manifest myself unto

22 him. Ju'das (not Is-car'i-ot) saith
 unto him, Lord, what is come to pass
 that thou wilt manifest thyself unto

23 us, and not unto the world? Je'sus
 answered and said unto him, If a
 man love me, he will keep my word:
 and my Father will love him, and we
 will come unto him, and make our

24 abode with him. He that loveth me
 not keepeth not my words: and the
 word which ye hear is not mine, but
 the Father's who sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto
 you, while yet abiding with you.

26 But the ¹⁶Comforter, *even* the Holy
 Spirit, whom the Father will send in
 my name, he shall teach you all things,

¹⁰ Chap. 14. 16. — ¹¹ 1 Cor. 15. 20. — ¹² Chap. 10. 38; 17. 21. —
¹³ 1 John 2. 5; 5. 3. — ¹⁴ Psal. 91. 1; 1 John 2. 21; 4. 16; Rev. 4. 20;
¹⁵ 1. 2. — ¹⁶ Chap. 7. 16. — ¹⁷ Luke 24. 49. — ¹⁸ 1 John 2. 27.

¹⁰ Or, and ye shall see. — ¹⁶ Or, Advocate; Or, Helper; Gr.
 Paraclete.

with you. Because I live, ye shall live also—That is, that higher and eternal life over
 which death has no power either in Christ or his followers. Christ has this life in himself
 (ver. 26); his followers derive it from him. Ver. 21.—*Plummer*.

20. At that day—Comp. 13. 23, 26. Pentecost, and thenceforth to the end of the world.
 Ye in me, and I in you—Comp. 15. 4, 5; 17. 21, 23; 1 John 3. 24; 4. 13, 15, 16.

22. Judas—Excluding the genealogies of Christ we have six persons of this name in the
 New Testament: 1. This Judas, who was the son of James (Luke 6. 16; Acts 1. 13); he is
 commonly identified with Lebbeus or Thaddæus. See on Matt. 10. 3. 2. Judas Iscariot. 3. The
 brother of Jesus Christ, and of James, Joses, and Simon. Matt. 13. 55; Mark 6. 3. 4. Judas,
 surnamed Barsabas. Acts 15. 22, 27, 32. 5. Judas of Galilee. Acts 5. 37. 6. Judas of Damascus.
 Acts 9. 11. Of these six the third is probably the author of the epistle; so that this remark is the
 only thing recorded in the New Testament of Judas the apostle as distinct from the other apostles.
 Nor is any thing really known of him from other sources.—*Plummer*. How is it—Literally,
What hath come to pass; "what has happened to determine thee?"

23. Abode—See on ver. 2. The thought of God dwelling among his people was familiar to
 every Jew. Exod. 25. 8; 29. 45; Zech 11. 10, etc. This is a thought far beyond that—God dwell-
 ing in the heart of the individual; and later Jewish philosophy had attained to this also. But the
 united indwelling of the Father and the Son by the means of the Spirit is purely Christian.—
Cambridge Bible.

God reveals himself to his children. Vers. 21-23. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

25. With this verse the discourse takes a fresh start, returning to the subject of the Paraclete.
 Perhaps there is a pause after verse 24.—*Plummer*.

26. But the Comforter—Better, *but the Advocate*. See on ver. 16. In my name—As my
 representative, taking place and continuing my work. "He shall not speak of himself... he

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.	and bring to your remembrance all
27 Peace ¹⁰ I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.	27 that I said unto you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.

¹⁰ bil. 4. 7; Col. 2. 16.

shall receive of mine and show it unto you." 16. 13, 14. Bring all things to your remembrance—Not merely the words of Christ, a particular in which this gospel is a striking fulfillment of this promise, but also the meaning of them, which the apostles often failed to see at the time. Compare 2. 22; 12. 16; Luke 9. 45; 24. 8.—*Plummer*. It is on the fulfillment of this promise to the apostles that their sufficiency as witnesses of all that the Lord did and taught, and consequently the *authenticity of the gospel narrative*, is grounded.—*Alford*.

27. Peace I leave you—Finally the discourse returns to the point from which it started. Its object had been to re-assure the sorrowful disciples against their Lord's departure, and with words of consolation it concludes. These are thrown into the form of leave-taking, or farewell.—*Sanday*. Not as the world giveth—The only right interpretation of this verse is that which is based on all oriental usage. "Peace" is the heart's benediction. The usage runs through all Old Testament times. See Gen. 43. 23; Judg. 19. 20; 1 Sam. 25. 6, etc. Comp. also Matt. 10. 13; Luke 10. 5, 6; Gal. 6. 16; Eph. 6. 23. So to-day the Arab gives his friends his "Salam." But the usage had become conventional. Sometimes the words were spoken hypocritically. Jesus says: I give you my blessing not at all in the world's spirit of form and ceremony, but with overflowing soul and with abiding friendship, enduring sympathy, the most tender concern for your welfare. Let this suffice to sustain your souls under the pressure of the sternest trial.—*Cowles*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Vers. 1-3.—With what skill God suits his creatures to their condition! He gives wings to the birds, fins to the fish, sails to the thistle-seed, a lamp to the glow-worm, great roots to moor the majestic cedar, and to the ivy a thousand hands to climb the wall. The wisdom of the arrangements in the kingdom of grace is yet more admirable. He fits heaven for the redeemed and the redeemed for heaven.—*Guthrie*.

A traveler recently returned from Jerusalem found, in conversation with Humboldt, that he was as conversant with the streets and houses of Jerusalem as he himself was. On being asked how long it was since he had visited it the aged philosopher replied, "I have never been there, but I expected to go sixty years since, and I *prepared myself*." We should make ready for the eternal home.

There will be every variety of character, taste, and disposition. There is not one mansion there, but "many." From opposite quarters of the theological compass, of the religious world, of human life and character, and through different modes of conversion, the weary travelers enter the city as through many gates, and meet by the same river. "Fruit" is borne for every turn of mind—for the patient sufferer, for the active servant, for the humble philosopher, for the spirits of just men made perfect. "The leaves" are for the healing, not of one single church only, not for the Scotsman or Englishman only, but for the Frenchman, the German, the Italian, the Russian.—*A. P. Stanley*.

Love leads to obedience. Ver. 15.—When the Scotch-Frenchman, Macdonald, was trying to lead up his men to a desperate charge, his eye, sweeping the hill through a glass, caught sight of the Little Corporal. Rising in his stirrups Macdonald said, "Soldiers, the eye of Napoleon is upon us;" and they went up and swept the enemy before them.—*Lorenz*. Christ's eye, beaming with love and confidence, is upon us.

"The love of Christ constraineth us!" It is like one of those applications of power you have often seen where a huge hammer is lifted up and comes down with a crash that breaks the

granite in pieces, or may be allowed to fall so gently and so true that it touches without cracking a tiny nut beneath it—the *one* principle, mighty and crushing when it is wanted, and yet coming down with gentle, with accurately-proportioned force on *all* life.—*Maclaren*.

A guide must be followed without demur. A captain yields complete authority to the pilot. A soldier fights when and where he is commanded. A branch in the vine adjusts itself to the seasons. It puts forth buds, blossoms, and leaves in the spring, fruit in the summer, and in the fall ripens its precious burden; then drops its leaves and gathers strength in winter. Just so we are to hourly adjust ourselves to the will of our Master.—*Boardman*.

The Holy Ghost supplies to us the place of Christ's personal presence. Vers. 16, 26.—The mother pours her affection on the child's heart so that two stars never alone into each other as these two souls shine into each other. Just as soul touches soul and feeling touches feeling so the Spirit of God influences the mind of man.—*Beecher*.

There is an island in a distant sea from whose shores the fishermen sail in tiny crafts to procure the treasures of the deep. During their absence thick mists often descend and so cover the place that they are left without a mark by which to steer their barks. But they are not left to wander unguided on the pathless sea. The women of the islet descend to the shores and raise the voice of song. By the aid of these sounds the boats are steered in safety to the shore. So in our darkness and trouble there is a kindly Light to lead and a soothing Presence to comfort us.

God reveals himself to his children. Vers. 21-23.—Somebody once asked, "How is it Mr. Bramwell has always something new to tell us when he preaches?" "Why," said the listener, "Brother Bramwell lives so near the gates of heaven that he hears a great many things that we don't get near enough to hear any thing about."

Each morning of General Gordon's sojourn in the Soudan there was one half-hour during which a handkerchief lay outside his tent. No one, no matter what their creed, color, or business, dared to enter the tent until this signal was removed. Every one knew God and Gordon were alone in there together.

One of the Prussian monarchs sometimes rode in a plain carriage *incognito*. A man on the road asked if he might ride with him. He got into the carriage and, being inquisitive, asked, "Are you a lieutenant?" "No," said the king. "Are you a major?" "No," said the king. "Are you a general?" "No," said the king; "but I am something higher than that." The man said, "Then you must be the emperor," and was overwhelmed. We ride with God in the chariot of his providence and sometimes know it not.—*Tulmage*.

TEACHING HINTS.

We come now to that last conversation of Jesus with his disciples, held around the supper table on the night before the crucifixion, and recorded only by John.

The Saviour has been speaking more clearly than ever before about his approaching separation from them. In these verses we have presented some of the **benefits of Christ's departure**. Why could he not remain on the earth? Why should he not be here with his Church now?

1. By his departure from us we have **an object of faith**. Ver. 1. We can see him by the insight of faith; can believe in him, as we believe in God; and by so believing can have our faith strengthened.

2. By his departure we have also **an object of hope**. Vers. 2, 3. Were he with us our thoughts would be on the earth; now that he is gone we look upward to heaven, toward the mansions which he is preparing for us.

3. His departure brings to us the **abiding Comforter**. Vers. 15-18. Though the Saviour has left the earth he has sent in his place the Holy Spirit as the constant consolation for his absence. Collate the texts in this and the succeeding chapters of John to show what the Comforter does for disciples.

4. Thus, through the departure of Christ, we have with us the **presence of God**. Vers. 19-23. Elsewhere we learn how full and abiding that presence is; that God dwells in the hearts of believers as in his ancient temple. See 1 Cor. 6. 19; 2 Cor. 6. 16.

5. And as a result of this divine presence we have the **peace of God**. Vers. 24-27. Even in the strife of tongues and the wrath of men the soul of Christ was at peace. Such peace as Jesus enjoyed his followers in every age shall possess.

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LESSON V.—November 1.

CHRIST THE TRUE VINE.—JOHN 15. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.—
John 15. 8.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME AND PLACE.—Thursday night, April 5, Passion Week, 30 A. D. This follows as a part of the discourse on which our last lesson was founded. This farewell conversation of the Lord with his disciples is given only by John. It followed the last supper, and was uttered in the upper room, or partly, perhaps, in the streets of Jerusalem and the rustic path outside the walls which led to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Authorized Version.

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every

Revised Version.

1 I am the true vine, and my Father

2 is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh

¹ Matt. 15. 13; Heb. 6. 8.

I. FRUITFUL BRANCHES. Verses 1-8.

1. **I am the true vine.**—We have here the same word for "true" as in 1. 9; 6. 32; Rev. 3. 14. Christ is the true, the genuine, the ideal, the perfect Vine, as he is the perfect Light, the perfect Bread, and the perfect Witness.—*Plummer*. The material creations of God are only inferior examples of that finer spiritual life and organism in which the creature is raised up to partake of the divine nature.—*Alford*. Whether the allegory was suggested by any thing external—vineyards, or the vine of the temple visible in the moonlight, a vine creeping in at the window, the "fruit of the vine" (Matt. 26. 29) on the table which they had just left—it is impossible to say. It may have been chosen for its own merits and its Old Testament associations (Psa. 80. 8-19; Isa. 5. 1-7; Jer. 2. 21, etc.) without any suggestion from without. The vine was a national emblem under the Maccabees and appears on their coins. The husbandman is the owner of the soil, who tends his vine himself and establishes the relation between the vine and the branches. There is a good deal of difference between the form of this allegory and the parable of the vineyard (Mark 12. 1) or that of the fruitless fig-tree, Luke 13. 6.—*Plummer*.

2. The fruit of Christ is the same as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5. 22, 23); and in the measure in which this fruit is borne in the life is the soul enriched in the spiritual knowledge of Christ which enables it to bear still more fruit. Thus fruitfulness in the life develops the consciousness of Christ's indwelling, and the consciousness of Christ's indwelling in the soul develops

Authorized Version.

branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

Revised Version.

it away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall

² Chap. 13, 10; 17, 17; Eph. 5, 26; 1 Pet. 1, 22.—³ Eph. 2, 21, 22; 3, 17; Col. 1, 32, 2, 7; 1 John 2, 6.—⁴ Hos. 14, 8; Phil. 4, 13.—⁵ Or, severed from me; Acts 4, 12.—⁶ Matt. 3, 10; 7, 19; Heb. 6, 4-6.—⁷ Matt. 5, 16; Phil. 1, 11.

¹ Or, was.—² Many ancient authorities read that ye bear much fruit, and be my disciples.

Christian fruitfulness in the life. The whole truth is well illustrated by 2 Pet. 1, 5-6. The word here rendered *purgeth* and that rendered in verse 3 *clean* are radically the same. Christ cleanseth the soul (1) by the operation of the law that right doing develops right feeling and opens the heart to higher influences (chap. 7, 17); (2) by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, which is given to each soul in the measure in which each proves itself worthy of and willing to receive him; (3) by the discipline of life, which is the manifestation of God's special love to the soul. Heb. 12, 6. The object of all this redemptive work is that the soul may bring forth more fruit.—*Abbott*.

Chastisement from God is always for our good. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

3. Now ye are clean.—Ye have been purified. Through the word.—Better, on account of the word. The whole teaching of Christ, not any particular utterance.—*Ellicott*.

Union with Christ is the secret of spiritual prosperity. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

4, 5. Abide in me and I in you, etc.—This is not a direction and a promise, equivalent to, If you abide in me I will abide in you; it is a twofold direction: Abide in me; see to it that I abide in you. It thus implies that Christ's indwelling in us is dependent upon ourselves. If any man hear Christ's voice and open the door, Christ comes in to him and sups with him. Rev. 3, 20. He that hungers and thirsts after righteousness is filled. Matt. 5, 6. By fidelity and obedience we abide in Christ; by docility and spiritual obedience we open the door that Christ may abide with us.—*Abbott*. Without me—Without Christ the Christian cannot live.

6. He is cast forth—The verb is in a past tense; he is already cast forth by the very fact of not abiding in Christ. This consequence follows so inevitably that to state the one is to state the other. The same remark applies to "is withered." But the cast-out branch may be grafted in again (Rom. 11, 23), and the dead branch may be raised to life again. Rom. 11, 24. The rest of the picture looks forward to the day of judgment. Men gather should be quite indefinitely they gather.—*Plummer*.

Severance from Christ brings death. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

7. The promise is similar to that in 14, 13, 14 both in its comprehensiveness and in its limitation. One who abides in Christ and has his words abiding in him cannot ask amiss.—*Plummer*.

8. Herein—When ye pray and obtain your prayers through abiding in me, my Father is

Authorized Version.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

12 This *is* my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater *love* hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Revised Version.

9 ye be my disciples. Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's command-

11 ments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and *that* your

12 joy may be fulfilled. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his

14 friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.

⁹ Chap. 16, 24; 17, 17; ¹ John 1, 4.—¹¹ Thess. 4, 9; ¹ Pet. 4, 8; ¹ John 3, 11.—¹² Rom. 13, 7; Eph. 4, 2.

glorified already. It is best to understand "herein" as referring to what precedes (comp. 4, 37 and 16, 30), in order to give the proper meaning to "that."—*Plummer*. "In granting your prayers my Father is glorified, in order that ye may be fruitful and become my disciples."

II. FAITHFUL FRIENDS. Verses 9-16.

9. As the Father hath loved—A measurement great beyond all finite comprehension.

10. I have kept my Father's commandments—This being in a subordinate sentence the tremendous import of it is liable to pass unnoticed. Looking back over a life of thirty years Jesus says, "I have kept the Father's commandments." Would the best man that ever lived, if only a man, dare to make such a statement?—*Cambridge Bible*.

11. That my joy may remain—The verse forms a conclusion to the allegory of the vine. Comp. 17, 18; 16, 25, 33. This does not mean "that I may have pleasure in you," but that the joy which Christ experienced through consciousness of his fellowship with the Father, and which supported him in his sufferings, might be in his disciples and support them in theirs. Here first, on the eve of his sufferings, does Christ speak of his joy. Human happiness can reach no higher than to share that joy which Christ ever felt in being loved by his Father and doing his will.—*Plummer*.

12. This is my commandment—Literally, *this is the commandment that is mine*. In verse 10 he said that to keep his commandments was the way to abide in his love. He now reminds them what his commandment is. It includes all others. A day or two before this Christ had been teaching that all the law and the prophets hang on the two great commands, "Love God with all thy heart," and "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. 22, 37-40. John teaches us that the second really implies the first. 1 John 4, 20.—*Watkins*. That ye love one another—Literally, *in order that ye love one another*; this is the purpose of the commandment.

The example and word of Christ should incite Christians to love one another. Vers. 12, 13. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

13. Greater love hath no man—The greatest love is that of which the purpose is dying for those loved. For his friends—Needless difficulty has been made about this, as if it were at variance with Rom. 5, 6-8. Christ here says that the greatest love that any one can show toward his friends is to die for them. Paul says that such cases of self-sacrifice for good men occur, but they are very rare. Christ, however, surpassed them, for he died not only for his friends but for his enemies; not only for the good but for sinners. There is no contradiction.—*Plummer*.

14. Ye are my friends—"And when I say 'friends,' I mean you." Whatsoever I command you—Better, *the things which I am commanding you*.

Authorized Version.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; ¹⁶for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye ¹⁷have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ¹⁸ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and ¹⁹that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Revised Version.

15 No longer do I call you ¹⁶servants; for the ¹⁷servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you. Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and ¹⁸that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

¹⁵ Acts 20, 27.—¹⁶ 1 John 4, 10.—¹⁷ Mark 16, 15; Col. 1, 6.

¹⁶ Gr. *bond-servants*.—¹⁸ Gr. *bond-ser. ant.*

15. Henceforth I call you not servants—Better, *no longer do I call you servants*. Comp. 14. He had implied that they were servants before (12. 26; 13. 12-16). What his lord doeth—To be taken literally. The slave or servant may see what his master is doing, but does not know the meaning or purpose of it.—*Plummer*. I have called you friends—Or, *you have I called friends*; “you” is emphatic. He who wills to do his will as a servant shall know of the doctrine as a friend (7. 17).—*Cambridge Bible*. I have made known unto you—As they were able to bear it (16. 12). After Pentecost they would be able to bear much more.—*Plummer*.

16. Ye have not chosen—Better, *ye choose me not, but I choose you*; “Ye” and “I” are emphatic; there is no emphasis on “me.” The reference is to their election to be apostles, as the very word used seems to imply. Comp. 6. 70; 13. 18; Acts 1. 2.—*Plummer*. Ordained you—Better, *appointed you* (as 2 Tim. 1. 11 and Heb. 1. 2), in order to avoid an unreal connection with ordination in the ecclesiastical sense. The same word used in the same sense as here is rendered “set” in Acts 13. 45 and 1 Cor. 12. 28; “ordained” 1 Tim. 2. 7, and “made” Acts 20. 28. Students of the law among the Jews select their own masters and teachers; but not so have you selected me from many others.—*Cowles*.

An obedient disciple has great privilege in prayer. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Chastisement from God is always for our good. Ver. 2.—To a person unacquainted with the process, the pruning of the tree, the clearing of the ground with the plowshare, the operation of the chisel on the stone, would look like an effort to destroy. But look at the things afterward. View the vine when it is adorned with rich clusters; survey the field when enriched with golden crops; examine the sculptor's labors when he has finished his design, and we see happy results out of apparent injury. So God seeks to take away the hurtful and strengthen the helpful.

You can imagine thistle-down so light that when you run after it your running motion would drive it away from you and the more you tried to catch it the faster it would fly from your grasp. And every man when he is chased by trouble the chasing should raise him higher and higher.—*Leecher*.

Union with Christ is the secret of spiritual prosperity. Ver. 3.—If a vine-branch is to sprout and throw out new suckers and shoots, the tube by which it communicates with the stock of the tree must adhere tightly to the stem and be well open for the passage of sap. If you desire to see the colors of furniture in this room whose shutters are closed, throw open the shutters and admit the full flow of sunlight. And if you desire to see the dead heart put forth the energies of spiritual life and the dark heart illuminated by the fair colors of grace, throw wide open the passage of communication between Christ and it.—*Goulburn*.

The vine holds the branch, and the branch holds the vine. These two are one attachment. The mother clings to her child, and the child in danger clings to the mother. If the child were dead neither would clasp the other. These two graspings stand or fall together; you must have both or neither.—*Arnot*.

Severance from Christ brings death. Ver. 6.—While visiting Tasmania my attention was arrested by huge trees which appear as “bleached ghosts of the forest.” On account of their great size and the cost of grubbing them up, the settler leaves them in the ground. He severs the bark from the trunk all round so that no sap can ascend in spring-time, and in a single year the trees die. The farmer can then sow his wheat and the unhindered sunshine will insure him a bounteous harvest. Those hundreds of towering but leafless trees are a solemn symbol of men who are dead, while in posture they seem upright. Companionship or worldliness has cut through the faith that linked them to Christ’s fullness until they pined away and drooped and died.—*Varley*.

The example and word of Christ should incite Christians to love one another. Vers. 12, 13.—When a rosebud is formed it must soon burst, or else, refusing to expand, rot at heart and die. And Christian love is just piety with its petals fully spread. The religion which fancies that it loves God, when it evinces no love for its brother, is a mildewed theology, a dogma with a worm at the root.—*Hamilton*.

Christ asks that our love should resemble his if it cannot equal it. A pearl of dew cannot hold the sun, but it may hold a spark of its light. A child by the sea trying to catch the waves cannot hold the ocean in a tiny shell, but he can hold a drop of the ocean water.—*Stanford*.

What is the use of being called by the name of Christ unless we live his spirit? “Either change your name or honor it,” said Alexander to an undutiful soldier who bore his name. When a little girl was asked what it was to be a Christian, she answered, “To do what Jesus would if he was a little girl and lived at our house.”

An obedient disciple has great privilege in prayer. Ver. 16.—A man once asked Alexander to give him some money to portion off a daughter. The king bade him go to the treasurer and demand what he pleased. He demanded such an enormous sum that the treasurer refused to pay without an express order, and then went and laid the facts before the king. “No,” replied Alexander, “let him have it all. I like that man; he does me honor; *he treats me like a king*, and proves that he believes me both rich and generous.” “Ask largely.”

Suppose you had to draw up a petition to an Emperor, and you had never done such a thing in your life; you would be afraid of making twenty blunders. Suppose his son, a prince, were to say, “Put it into my hands; you don’t know how to do it; I do; and what is wrong I will put out, and what is wanting I will put in; and I will put my own name to it and present it to the emperor for you.” It would be more likely to prevail than if presented as you wrote it. Now, when I make my prayer I pray for twenty wrong things, but Christ puts out what is wrong, puts in what is wanting, puts his own name to it, and presents it to God.—*Coley*.

TEACHING HINTS.

Describe an Oriental vineyard growing on the terraced slope of a hill. Such vineyards must have covered the side of the Mount of Olives, when Jesus and his disciples walked across the valley of the Kedron, on the night of the last supper.

The parable presents two sides of a truth, the *vine* and the *branches*.

I. Christ the Vine.—Notice what is revealed in these verses concerning Christ.

1.) *The Giver of life.* Vers. 1-7. The branch lives, because it is in the vine (ver. 2); when separated from the vine it becomes withered and dead. Ver. 6. All spiritual life comes from our relation to Christ.

2.) *The beloved Son.* Vers. 8-10. “My Father” is named in each of these three verses. This is suggestive. Because he is the Son of God we, who share his life, share also his honor, and become children of God.

3.) *The loving Friend.* Vers. 11-15. He has chosen us to be his friends, and has given us the highest proof of his love in laying down his life for us.

4.) *The divine Teacher.* Ver. 16. By his communion with the Father all knowledge is his; and by his communion with disciples all his knowledge becomes theirs also.

5.) *The Master of disciples.* Vers. 12-16. The condition of our relationship to Christ is that of obedience. We must submit our wills to his will if we would enjoy his fellowship.

II. Christians the branches.—Let us search these verses again for their revelation concerning disciples in their relation to Christ.

1.) *They are living branches.* Ver. 2. They have life because, having the capacity for life, they are vitally united with the vine. A dead branch cannot be made living by fastening to a living tree.

2.) *They are fruitful branches.* Vers. 2-8. This fruit is of two kinds; results in the character of the believer, and results in his influence, as winning souls.

3.) *They are loving branches.* Vers. 9-13. Between the disciple and his Master flows a strong current of love; a love between the vine and its branches; and among the branches between each other. This is Christian fellowship.

4.) *They are joyous branches.* Ver. 11. Where there is true love, there is true happiness. Those who abide in Christ know the joy of this relation.

5.) *They are obedient branches.* Vers. 14-16. The head of the Church, which is Christ, has authority over the Church, which is the body of disciples. We are friends of Jesus, while his will and ours are one.

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LESSON VI.—November 8.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.—JOHN 16. 1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—He will guide you into all truth.—John 16. 13.

TIME AND PLACE.—Same as last lesson.—See Introductory Note there.

Authorized Version.

1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that

Revised Version.

1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be made to

2 stumble. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh,

THE ABSENT SAVIOUR. Verses 1-6.

1. *These things*—These discourses generally. Should not be offended—Literally, *should not be made to stumble*. Comp. 6. 61; 1 John 2. 10.

2. *Out of the synagogues*—Or, *out of the synagogue*—that is, excommunicate you. Comp. 9. 22; 12. 42. How serious a threat this was to these Jews we can hardly appreciate. Even the lightest form forbade the condemned person to approach within four cubits of any other Hebrew, even wife or child; and lasted thirty days. The severest was a perpetual exclusion from religious meetings and all fellowship of God's people.—*Ellicott*. *Yea, the time cometh*—Better, *nay, there cometh an hour*. Comp. 5. 25. “You might think excommunication an extreme measure;

Authorized Version.

'whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

8 And 'these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I told you, that, when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I go my way to him that sent we; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but 'if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Revised Version.

that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.

8 And these things will they do, because they have not known the Fa-

4 ther, nor me. But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you. And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go unto him that sent me; and none of you asketh me,

6 Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things unto you,

7 sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the 'Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will

² Acts 8. 1; 9. 1; 24. 9.—³ Rom. 10. 9; 1 Cor. 2. 8; 1 Tim. 1. 12.—⁴ Acts 2. 33; Eph. 4. 8.

¹ Or, *Advocate*; Or, *Helper*; Gr. *Paraclete*.

but they will go far greater lengths than this." That whosoever—Literally, *in order that every one who*. The divine purpose is again clearly indicated. The history of religious persecution is the fulfillment of this prophecy.—*Plummer*. But through it all God maketh the wrath of man to praise him. Doeth God service—Better, *offereth service to God*. Dr. Watkins quotes a Rabbinic comment: "Whosoever sheddeth the blood of the wicked is as he who offereth sacrifice."

Prejudice leads to the wildest extremes. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

3. They have not known—Better, *they did not recognize*. The verb implies that they had the opportunity of knowing; but they had failed to see that God is love, and that Jesus came not to shut out, but to bring in, not to destroy, but to save. The very names "Father" (here used with special point) and "Jesus" might have taught them better things.—*Plummer*.

4. But—Making a fresh start; *but to return* (to v. 1). There is no inconsistency between this statement and passages like Matt. 10. 16-39; 24. 9; Luke 6. 22, etc. Ye may remember—Even their persecution would by this means strengthen their faith.—*Watkins*.

5. I go my way—Hitherto he has been with them to protect them and to be the main object of attack; soon they will have to bear the brunt without him. This is all that they feel at present—how his departure affects themselves, not how it affects him. And yet this latter point is all important even as regards themselves, for he is going in order to send the Paraclete.—*Plummer*. None of you asketh—Peter had asked this very question (13. 36) and Thomas had implied it (14. 5); but what the words here mean is, "None of you are, out of love for me, asking about the place whither I am going. Your thoughts are not with me. It is to you as nothing that I am returning to Him that sent me."—*Ellicott*.

6. Sorrow hath filled.—Mortals are made unhappy, not so much by events as by the operation of their own minds upon them.—*Epictetus*.

II. THE PRESENT COMFORTER. Verses 7-16.

7. It is expedient—The apostles themselves were not prepared for the receiving of the Holy Ghost as long as they were satisfied with being happy in our Saviour's company on earth.—*Ford*. He does not say, It is expedient for Me, but for you.—*Musculus*.

The Holy Spirit fulfills many needful offices for us. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
8 And when he is come, he will *reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:	8 send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because
9 Of *sin, because they believe not on me;	9 and of judgment: of sin, because
10 Of *righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;	10 they believe not in me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and
11 Of *judgment, because * the prince of this world is judged.	11 ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath
12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.	12 been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear
13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, * he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, <i>that</i> shall he speak: and he will * show you things to come.	13 them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, <i>these</i> shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come.
14 He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show <i>it</i> unto you.	14 He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare <i>it</i> unto you.
15 All * things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show <i>it</i> unto you.	15 All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare <i>it</i> unto you.

^a Or, convince.—⁴ Acts 2, 22; Rom. 1, 18-23; 3, 9; 14, 23; Gal. 3, 22; 1 John 8, 19.—⁵ Isa. 42, 6, 21; 45, 19; Dan. 9, 24; Acts 2, 32.—⁶ Acts 35, 18.—⁷ Luke 10, 18; chap. 19, 21; Eph. 2, 8; Col. 2, 18; Heb. 1, 14.—⁸ Chap. 14, 26; 1 John 2, 20, 27.—⁹ 1 Tim. 4, 1.—¹⁰ Matt. 11, 27; chap. 17, 10; Col. 1, 19.

8. He will reprove—"Convince" (in the margin) or "convict" is to be preferred. This rendering gives additional point to the rendering "Advocate" for Paraclete. To convince and convict is a large part of the duty of an advocate. He must vindicate and prove the truth.—*Plummer*.

Self-righteousness is destroyed by conviction of sin. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

9. Of sin—The work of the Spirit begins with convincing man that he is a fallen, sinful creature in rebellion against God. There is a twofold conviction of sin: 1.) Rational, when a man's reason is nonplussed, and he cannot deny the truth of it; 2.) Spiritual, when a man's heart stoops under it, and he takes the shame to himself.—*E. Leigh*.

12. Many things to say—They are his friends (15, 15), and there is nothing which he wishes to keep back from them. God is open-hearted to his saints. And when he doth conceal any truths from them for the present, it is not that he grudges the communication of them, but because they cannot bear them. Is God so free and open with thee, and wilt thou be reserved to him?—*Gurnall*.

13. He will guide you into all truth—Christ is the way and the truth. The Spirit leads men into the way and thus to the truth. But he does no more than guide. He does not compel, he does not carry. They may refuse to follow, and if they follow they must exert themselves. He shall not speak of himself—This does not mean "shall not speak about himself," but "from himself."—*Plummer*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Prejudice can be carried to strange lengths. Ver. 2. The prejudiced man is like a man walking on a narrow path with his eyes downward, who will not raise them to behold the grandest scenery; or like a man shut up in his house, with the doors locked, the windows closed, the shutters fastened, and the blinds down, without a lamp to light his dismal condition, yet indulging in the satisfaction that he is right and all who differ from him wrong.—*Hughes*.

Roman governors and proconsuls vied with each other in hunting Christians to death. They

invented torments, dragged saints at the heels of wild horses, laid them upon red-hot gridirons; they were wrapped up in skins and daubed with pitch and set to burn in Nero's gardens, they were left to rot in dungeons, lions tore them to pieces, wild bulls tossed them upon their horns, and all the swords of the legionaries which had put to rout the armies of all nations were turned against them.—*Spurgeon*. And all this persecution was without reason, the result of prejudice.

The Holy Spirit fulfills many needful offices for us. Ver. 7. In the sense in which Comforter or Advocate is employed there is wide application. If we are sick we call to us a physician; if perplexed we call a lawyer; going to build, we call an architect; if in trouble, we call a kind friend. All these persons may be called "Advocates," persons "*called to us*." Yet they poorly reflect the many-sided help afforded by our divine Advocate.—*Osborn*.

The same shower blesses various lands according to their susceptibilities. It makes grass to spring up in the mead, the grain to vegetate in the field, the shrub to grow on the plain, and flowers garnished with every hue of loveliness to blossom in the garden. The influence of the Holy Spirit produce blessings in variety: conviction in the guilty, illumination in the ignorant, holiness in the defiled, strength in the feeble, and comfort in the distressed.—*Bate*.

Self-righteousness is destroyed by conviction of sin. Vers. 8-11. The squirrel in his wire cage reminds one of one's self-righteous efforts after salvation, but he was never half so wearied as I. The poor *chiffonier* in Paris trying to earn a living by picking dirty rags out of the kennel succeeds better than I did in trying to obtain comfort by my own works. Dickens's cab-horse, which was only able to stand because it was never taken out of the shafts, was strength and beauty compared with my starveling hopes. Wretches condemned to the galleys, whose only reward for incessant toil was the lash of the keeper, were in a more happy plight than I when under legal bondage. Tell us not of the writhings of the dying on the battle-field. Some of us when our heart was wounded by the Spirit would have counted death a happy exchange.—*Spurgeon*.

The Holy Spirit makes truth plain and powerful. Vers. 13-15. He comes like a rushing wind upon the disciples, and in an hour they are new men. The jailer hears and believes in a night. Luther, while toiling up the holy stairs of the Lateran, holding to salvation by works, drops that scheme and lays hold of a higher one. Ignatius Loyola in a dream has a sight of the mother of Christ, and awakes a soldier of Jesus. We do not grow into the possession of new spiritual truths; we awake to them. They come not as the sunrise, but as the lightning that illuminates earth and sky in one quick flash and so imprints them in the vision forever.—*Munger*.

TEACHING HINTS.

There are two distinct themes in this lesson. The first six verses present one subject, the troubles of Christ's followers.

The followers of Christ must expect to meet with trouble while on earth:

1.) *By persecution from the world.* Vers. 1, 2. In all ages the saints have been persecuted, and even now the world is the enemy of those who follow Christ with all their hearts.

2.) *From the world's ignorance of God.* Vers. 3, 4. If men could see God, they would not be his enemies. But their eyes are blinded, and they oppose Christ because they know him not.

3.) *From the absence of Jesus.* Vers. 5, 6. The disciples felt sorrow of heart because they were soon to lose their Master. The Church on earth still walks without the visible presence of its Lord. We should stand in an attitude of eager expectancy, waiting for our Lord's return.

But the prominent topic of the lesson is the mission of the Holy Spirit, in verses 7-16. Here we notice the purposes for which the Spirit descends:

1.) *To comfort disciples.* Ver. 7. A visible Saviour could be known to only a select company of disciples; but the divine Comforter can come to all. Each heart may enjoy the ministrations of the Holy Ghost.

2.) *To convict sinners.* Vers. 8, 9. That is, to awaken in the hearts of men the consciousness of sin, which is the prerequisite of salvation. Notice that the great sin of man is the failure to believe in Jesus as Christ.

3.) *To encourage believers.* They are encouraged to rest upon the righteousness of Christ, as their representative before God. Ver. 10. And they are encouraged to bear the persecutions of the world in the knowledge that they will receive justice when the world and its prince are judged together. Ver. 11.

4.) *To enlighten inquirers.* Vers. 12, 13. There are many things that Jesus would have taught to his disciples, but they were not ready for them. Gradually they would grow up to the higher and clearer revelation of the Spirit. We find that the epistles of Paul contain a more complete knowledge of spiritual truth than the teachings of Christ in the gospels.

5.) *To glorify Christ.* Vers. 14-16. The coming of the Spirit would not lessen Christ's honor, but would increase it. Note, for example, how much stronger are the declarations of the exaltation of Christ in the later epistles, as Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Hebrews, than in the earlier gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The Church now has a clearer conception of Jesus as the Son of God than most of its members possessed in the apostolic age.

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LESSON VII.—November 15.

CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR HIS DISCIPLES.—JOHN 17. 1-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.—He ever liveth to make intercession for them.—Heb. 7. 25.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME AND PLACE.—Same as last two lessons. See Introductory Note to Lesson V.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.—So closes the Saviour's farewell address to his apostles. From man he now turns to God; and, as is suitable in address to God, in prayer. Though properly called a prayer, but a small part and but a few points are precisely *petition*. For himself he *claims*, as his right, his glorious investment. For his disciples he supplicates unity, preservation, and consecration. For all future believers he supplicates the same holy unity, and indirectly prays for the conversion of the world to the faith. The greater part of the prayer is what we will call *representation*; performed by him who is the great representative of us all before God.—*Whedon*. It was not till he uttered his last earthly prayer that Christ no longer retired by himself to hold solitary intercourse with the Father. For the first time he then raised his voice to Heaven in the presence of his followers, and permitted them to hear him openly making intercession for them. It was time that they should partake more largely of the spirit of grace. They were gradually ripening into meet witnesses of his resurrection and preachers of his kingdom.—*Bishop Sumner*. I cannot agree with *Canon Westcott*, that these last discourses and this prayer were spoken in the temple. It is indeed, true, that on that night the temple was thrown open at midnight, and speedily thronged. But if our Lord had come before that time he would have found its gates closed; if after that time, he could not have found a place of retirement and quiet, where it is conceivable that could have been said and prayed which is recorded in St. John 14, 15, 16, 17.—*Ederheim*.

Authorized Version.

1 These words spake Je'sus, and lift'd up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As 'thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many 'as thou hast given him.

3 And 'this is life eternal, that they might know thee 'the only true God, and Je'sus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

Revised Version.

1 These things spake Je'sus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee: even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever thou hast given him, to them he should give eternal life. And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, *even Jesus Christ*. I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which

1 Dan. 7. 14; 1 Cor. 15. 25; Phil. 2. 10; Heb. 2. 8.—2 Chap. 8. 27.—3 Isa. 53. 11; Jer. 9. 24.—4 1 Cor. 8. 4; 1 Thess. 1. 9.

I. THE GLORY OF THE FATHER. Verses 1-5

1. **Lifted up his eyes to heaven**—Hitherto his glance had been horizontally directed upon his listening apostles; but now our evangelist beholds him turn his eye upward, and recognizes that his spirit is with God. The phrase *to heaven* would naturally but not necessarily imply that he was under the open sky. Heaven, though upward, is not the sky.—*Whedon*. The attitude is in marked contrast to his falling on his face in the garden. Matt. 26. 39.—*Plummer*. As already noted, Jesus now speaks as if his passion were but a point in time, and that he is already ascended into the paternal presence. Commentators, in consequence of not appreciating this, have lost much of the beauty and power of this great prayer. It is the commencement and specimen of his ever-living intercession; nay, it is that intercession itself. Ever here recorded, it is ever being offered. Read by the Church on earth, it ever avails in the sanctuary of heaven. **Father**—The first appealing word of the eternal intercession, simply Father, a name of God unknown to the world before the Son revealed it. **The hour is come**—John 2. 4. The life of Jesus was marked by the divine order into *hours*, periods, or crises. But verily now had come the *hour* of hours, the consummating period of a complete work and an attained glory.—*Whedon*.

2. **The Messiah is King of all flesh, not of the Jews only**.—*Plummer*. That he should give, etc.—Literally, *in order that all that thou hast given him, he should give to them eternal life*.

3. **This is life eternal**—This is what it consists in. Comp. 8. 19; 15. 12.—*Cambridge Bible*. The vital seed of eternal life, its first minute installment, is placed within the believing soul on earth, and, unless on earth removed, will put forth in eternal life in heaven. It is the well of water within springing up to everlasting life. **That they might know**—Literally, *in order that they may recognize*. Comp. 6. 29; 12. 15; 1 John 3. 11, 23; 5. 8; 2 John 6. He has unfolded those attributes in such plans and deeds of redemption, as that eternal life is realized in the very knowing them in their knowable fullness. **Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent**—Better, *him whom thou didst send—Jesus Christ*; or, *Jesus as Christ*. This portion of the truth the Jews failed to recognize. It is remarkable that this is the only instance in the gospels in which the words *Jesus Christ* are used as one compound name. They are so used frequently in the epistles.—*Whedon*.

Our relation to Christ in this life decides our destiny in another. Vers. 2, 3. See ILLUSTRATIONS. In a true sense, already are we saved or lost.

4. **I have glorified**—The leading feature in the character of Jesus Christ unquestionably was devotedness to the service of God. It was "his meat and drink" to do his Father's will. Fancy can imagine nothing more sublime than the unity of that great purpose.—*J. Bowdler*.

Christ worked for others to the last. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Would you lead a Christian life? Lead such a life as Christ led. No life unlike his can be a Christian life; and every life in proportion as it comes near to his will in that same degree be Christian.—*A. W. Hare*, 356

Authorized Version.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory * which I had with thee before the world was.

6 I 'have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

9 I pray for them: 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And *all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, *keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, ¹⁰ as we *are*.

Revised Version.

5 thou hast given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with

6 thee before the world was. I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: for the words which thou

8 gavest me I have given unto them; and they received *them*, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send

9 me. I 'pray for them: I 'pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they 10 are thine: and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.

11 And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we *are*.

⁸ Chap. 1, 1; 10, 30; 14, 9; Phil. 2, 6; Col. 1, 15; Heb. 1, 3, 10.
⁹ Ps. 77, 77.—¹⁰ John 8, 19.—¹¹ Rom. 8, 20.—¹² 1 Pet. 1, 5.—¹³ Chap. 10, 30.

1 Gr. *make request*.—2 Gr. *make request*.

5. With thine own self—In fellowship with thee. You have a great trust to commit to God when you die; and God hath a great trust to commit to you while you live. If you keep his truths He will keep your soul. Rev. 8. 10.—*Hare*.

II. THE WORK OF THE SON. Verses 6-10.

6. Which thou gavest—Better, *whom thou hast given*; in the next clause "gavest" is right. Sometimes the Father is said to "give" or "draw" men to Christ (6. 44; 6. 37, 65; 10. 29; 18. 9); sometimes Christ is said to "choose" them (6. 70; 15. 16); but it is always in their power to refuse; there is no compulsion (1. 11, 12; 8. 18, 19; 12. 47, 48.—*Plummer*).

7. Now they have known—"They have recognized, come to know." Comp. 5. 42; 6. 69; 8. 52, 55; 14. 9.

8. Came out from—Better, *came forth from*. They recognize that his mission was divine; they believe that he was sent as the Messiah. They had *proof* of the first point, the second was a matter of faith.—*Plummer*.

9. I pray for them, etc.—Literally, *I am praying concerning them; concerning the world I am not praying, but concerning them whom, etc.* "For them who have believed I in turn am praying; for the world I am not praying." Of course, this verse does not mean that Christ never prays for unbelievers; ver. 23 and Luke 23. 34 prove the contrary; but it is for the chosen few, in return for their allegiance, that he is praying now.—*Cambridge Bible*.

10. All mine are thine—Better, *all things that are mine are thine*. There should be no full stop at the end of ver. 9.

Authorized Version.

12 While I was with them in the world, "I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and "none of them is lost," but the son of perdition; that "the Scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and "the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that "thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Revised Version.

12 While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might

13 be fulfilled. But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them "from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them "from "the evil

16 one. They are not of the world, even

17 as I am not of the world. "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.

¹² Chap. 6, 39; 10, 28; Heb. 2, 12.—¹³ Chap. 18, 9; 1 John 2, 19.—¹⁴ Chap. 13, 18.—¹⁵ Page 109, 8; Acts 1, 30.—¹⁶ 1 John 3, 12.—¹⁷ Gal. 1, 4; 2 Thess. 1, 2; 1 John 5, 14.

³ Gr. make request.—⁴ Gr. out of.—⁵ Gr. out of.—⁶ Or, evil.—⁷ Or, Consecrate.

III. THE NEED OF THE DISCIPLES. Verses 11-19.

12. While I was with them—This expresses the protection which is the result of the watching. Moreover, the reading must be changed as in verse 11: *I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me; and I guarded them.* None of them is lost—Better, *not one of them perished.* The son of perdition—The phrase is used twice only in the New Testament: here of Judas, in 2 Thess. 2, 3 of the "man of sin." Comp. "children of light," "children of darkness." Such expressions are common in Hebrew. "Children of perdition" occurs Isa. 57, 4, "people of perdition," Eccles. 16, 9, and "son of death," 2 Sam. 12, 5. We cannot here preserve the full force of the original, in which "perish" and "perdition" are represented by cognate words: "none perished but the son of perishing."—*Cambridge Bible.*

13. Christ is praying aloud in order that his words may comfort them when they remember that he himself consigned them to his Father's keeping. Comp. 11, 42.—*Plummer.*

14. Hath hated—Rather, *hated.* These are the two results of discipleship; on the one side, Christ's protection (ver. 12) and the gift of God's word; on the other, the hatred of the world.—*Cambridge Bible.*

In the worst troubles the Christian has sources of joy. Vers. 13, 14. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

15. We may sojourn in the world, yet not be greedy after the world; we may mind our work in the world, and yet not make the world our highest good; we may converse with men of the world, and yet not set our hearts upon the world; we may be industrious in the world, and yet not suffer the world to engross our affections; we may provide for our families in the world, and yet not conform to the world; we may eat and drink in the world, and yet not participate in the sins of the world; we may trade and traffic in the world, and yet not have the spirit of the world; we may suffer afflictions in the world, and yet be far from the sorrow of the world; we may prudently contrive things in the world, and yet be strangers to the wisdom of the world; in a word our living in the world is no hinderance to our arriving at a holy contempt of it.—*Horneck.*

17. Sanctify them—In the three ensuing verses Jesus represents their consecration to their mission. God must sanctify them as Christ sanctifies himself. To sanctify is to set apart to some special divine use, and this may or may not require an inner purification of the being set apart. If an unholiness, as man, be set apart to a pure use, he must be rendered internally as pure as the use to which he is appropriated. Of an indifferent thing, intrinsically neither holy nor unholy,

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.	18 As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.
19 And ¹⁷ for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be ^a sanctified through the truth.	19 And for their sakes I ^a sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.
^a 1 Cor. 1. 30; 1 Thess. 4. 7; Heb. 10. 10.— ^a Or, truly sanctified.	^a Or, Consecrate.

as a vessel for the sanctuary service, there can be no purification but a physical one with an emblematical meaning. Where a holy being, as Christ, is set apart for a holy work, as for the work of redemption, no inward purification is possible; for he is already perfectly pure. It is a consecration of the holy to the holy. The use to which man is divinely consecrated is eternal service in the sanctuary of heaven; but to attain this use his entire purification must be perfect. If he fails in this his failure is total. Through thy truth—Rather, *in thy truth*. Thy word is truth—*Thy word* doubtless means the gospel revelation, both in its doctrinal and preceptive parts; its doctrinal parts exhibiting the scheme of salvation, its preceptive enjoining us to obey its conditions. The *agent* of this sanctification through or in the Gospel, according to Jesus's prayer, is *God*, who both gives the Gospel which sanctifies and animates it by his Spirit to a sanctifying power. Hence it is not the mere incidental truth, it is the divine Spirit which sanctifies.—*Whedon*.

God's word breathes sanctifying influences. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

18. Sent me . . . I also sent them—So that both, primarily and secondarily, are from God; and as they were directed to ordain others to the same work, so it is evident that a body of ministry issuing from God himself, distinct from the laity, is a divine institution in the Christian Church.—*Whedon*.

19. Sanctify—Or, *consecrate*, as in verse 17. Christ does for himself that which he prays the Father to do for his disciples. In 10. 36 he speaks of himself as consecrated by the Father; set apart for a sacred purpose. But only thus far is the consecration of Christ and of his disciples the same. In them it also implied redemption and cleansing from sin; and in this sense the word is frequently connected with "purify." 2 Cor. 7. 1; Eph. 5. 26; 2 Tim. 2. 21; Heb. 9. 13. The radical meaning of the word is not separation, as is sometimes stated, but holiness, which involves separation, namely, the being set apart for God.—*Plummer*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Our relation to Christ in this life decides our destiny for another. Vers. 2, 3.

—A cannon is but a short tube, but its direction at the moment of discharge governs the whole flight of the ball. A clay mold is a fragile thing, but the molten metal poured into it may retain the shape so given ages after the mold has crumbled into dust. The plate prepared by a photographer may be exposed to the light only for a very few seconds, but the impressions then caught may be retained for many years. Flowers are frail and drop into the ground, but they leave behind a ripening seed that may perpetuate the species.

When Dr. Fisher, who was beheaded under Henry VIII., came out of the Tower and saw the scaffold, he took from his pocket a small Testament and prayed for some passage to support him in his awful trial. His eyes fell on verse 3 of this chapter, and he exclaimed, "Praise the Lord! this is sufficient; death and eternity have no terrors."

Christ worked for others to the last. Ver. 4.—When the probationers in the school of Pythagoras grew weary in trying to be helpful to others and preferred to be idle they were treated as dead. Obsequies were performed and tombs were raised with inscriptions to warn others of their wretched end.

Duty can be satisfied with its doings, but love can never do enough. "Thank God," said the dying Nelson, "I have done my duty." "Alas!" says the dying Christian, "I have been an unprofitable servant."—*W. M. Taylor*.

Death of the Venerable Bede.—The dawn broke on another sleepless night, but again the old man called his scholars around him and bade them write. "There is still a chapter wanting."

(In his translation of John), said the scribe, "and it is hard for thee to question thyself any longer." "Take thy pen," said Bede, "and write quickly." Amid tears and farewells the day wore on to evening. "There is yet one sentence unwritten, dear master," said the youth. "Write quickly," said the dying man. "It is finished now," said the boy. Placed on the pavement, his head in his scholar's arms, he chanted the solemn "Glory to God," and as it closed quietly passed away.

Professor John Stuart Blackie gave up his chair of Greek in Edinburgh University to devote all his remaining energies to work for the Highland crofters. "Let Greek die," he said recently; "let Hebrew die; let learning go to the dogs; but let human beings and human brotherhood live."

In the worst troubles the Christian has sources of joy. Vers. 13, 14.—Joy lives in the midst of sorrow. The two do not clash but blend into one another, just as in the Arctic regions you shall find beneath the cold snow the budding of the spring flowers and fresh green grass; just as in the midst of the undrinkable sea there may be welling up some little fountain of fresh water that comes from a deeper depth than the great ocean around it, and pours its sweet streams along the surface of the salt waste.—*Maclaren*.

If it is not given to many of us to soar into a seventh-heaven rapture we have a joy that can walk along life's dusty road, and do a good day's work, and thrive amidst home cares; that, like the caged canary, can sing in the kitchen, and that loves the prattle of the children. It is not an April day of sunshine and shower that ends in a night of sharp frost, but a deep, settled gladness in the Lord. As in a factory where there are whistling bands and whirling wheels and darting shuttles and thousand threads the maiden who tends the frame sings her song, knowing that every shooting shuttle is working out the pattern, so the Christian can be calm, knowing all must work for good to him.—*Mark Guy Pearse*.

Christians can rejoice in God even in their deepest griefs. As waves phosphoresce so joys flash from the swing of the sorrows of our souls.—*Becher*.

God's word breathes sanctifying influences. Ver. 17.—Just as the sun never pours forth darkness, so the Bible never leads to hell. Like the needle to the pole it always points to heaven, and offers wings to waft the weary home.—*Nichol*.

An eminent physician said he could tell when he entered a house whether the Bible was there as an educator or not.

A Roman Catholic priest rebuked a young woman for reading that "bad book," pointing to the Bible. "Sir," she said, "my brother was an idler, a gambler, and drunkard. He studied the Bible, and now works with industry, no longer drinks or plays cards, but brings home his money, and our life is delightful. How can a bad book produce such good fruit?"

TEACHING HINTS.

We follow the Saviour and his eleven disciples through the silent streets of Jerusalem, over the valley of the Kedron, to the edge of the garden of Gethsemane. There, under the moon, this prayer was probably offered as the last act of the Saviour's ministry.

I. Notice the traits of this prayer. It stands alone, the most remarkable utterance in the life of Christ.

1. *It is filial prayer.* Notice throughout that Jesus speaks of himself as the Son, and calls God his Father. Fortunate are those in whose behalf the Son appeals to the King!

2. *It is confident prayer.* There is no groaning nor wrestling in this prayer. It is uttered with all the confidence of One who is sure of recognition and acceptance. Our Saviour knows that he is welcome before the throne.

3. *It is intercessory prayer.* Christ makes no petition for himself in this prayer. So far as it relates to himself it is a report of his mission to the earth, which is now regarded as accomplished, though its final act remains to be consummated in a few hours. His supplications are all for others.

4. *It is limited prayer.* There are those who are shut out from his intercessions, but it is by their own act, because they will not accept him as their Advocate.

II. Notice also the objects of his prayer. What does the Saviour, already standing at the door of heaven, ask in behalf of his disciples?

1. *He prays for their safety.* Ver. 11. They are in the world, exposed to dangers, and he prays that they may be kept "from the evil one." Ver. 15.

2. *He prays for their unity.* Vers. 11, 12. "That they may be one." The same thought is expanded in verse 21. This unity is not one of form, but a unity of spirit toward which the Church is constantly growing.

3. *He prays for their joy.* Ver. 13. The joy of Christ which he would have imparted to his disciples is the glad consciousness of absolute unity of heart and will with God.

4. *He prays for their holiness.* Vers. 17-19. That they may be set apart from the world and kept as a peculiar treasure consecrated to God.

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LESSON VIII.—November 22.

CHRIST BETRAYED.—JOHN 18. 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.—Mark 14. 41.

TIME.—Late Thursday night of Passion Week.

PLACE.—The Garden of Gethsemane.

Authorized Version.

1 When Je'sus had spoken these words, he 'went forth with his disciples over

¹ Luke 22. 39.

Revised Version.

1 When Je'sus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples

I. BETRAYED. Verses 1-3.



FRAGMENT OF THE TYROPEAN BRIDGE.

makes an angular turn opposite the temple. Thence, south-eastwardly, it passes between Siloam

Authorized Version.

the 'brook Ced'ron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Ju'das also, which betrayed him, knew the place: 'for Je'sus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

8 Ju'das 'then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Phar'i-sees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Je'sus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

Revised Version.

over the 'brook 'Kid'ron, where was a garden, into the which he entered,

2 himself and his disciples. Now Ju'das also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Je'sus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

8 Ju'das then, having received the 'band of soldiers, and officers from the chief priests and the Phar'i-sees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Je'sus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye?

² 2 Sam. 15. 23.—³ Luke 21. 37; 22. 39.—⁴ Matt. 26. 47; Mark 14. 23.¹ Luke 22. 47; Acts 1. 16.

¹ Or, ravine; Gr. winter-torrent.—² Or, of the Cedars.—³ Or, cohort.

and the City, and thence goes toward the Dead Sea through a deep and singularly wild gorge. During the summer season, in the absence of rains, the channel is perfectly dry, so that in reality its occasional turbid stream formed a sort of gutter for the eastern margin of the city. By a bridge over the ravine the traveler still passes from St. Stephen's gate to Gethsemane.—*Whedon*. A garden—Or, orchard. Matthew and Mark give us the name of the inclosure or "parcel of ground" of which this "garden" formed the whole or part: Gethsemane—oil-press—and no doubt olives abounded there. The very ancient olive-trees still existing on the traditional site were probably put there by pilgrims who replanted the spot after devastation at the siege of Jerusalem.—*Plummer*.

2. Jesus oft-times resorted thither—Literally, *assembled there*. Here, beneath shadowing olive-trees, he held discourse with his followers. Hence, this is the place where Judas, whom we last saw departing from the supper table (18. 30), was again to meet his Master. At this point, according to the other evangelists, is to be inserted the narrative of the agony of Gethsemane.—*Whedon*. Comp. 8. 1. The owner must have known of these gatherings, and may himself have been a disciple. Our English version gives little idea of the exactness of the description which follows.—*Sanday*.

Periods of seclusion and prayer yield strength.—Vers. 1, 2. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

3. Band—The word for band seems elsewhere in the New Testament to mean "cohort," the tenth of a legion (Matt. 27. 27; Mark 15. 16; Acts 10. 1; 21. 31; 27. 1), and with this Polybius (xi, xxi, 1; (xxiii, 1) agrees. But Polybius sometimes (vi, xxiv, 5; xv, ix, 7; iii, ciii, 3) appears to use *speira* for "maniple," the third part of a cohort and about two hundred men. In any case only a portion of the cohort which formed the garrison of the fortress of Antonia can here be meant; but that the arrest of Jesus was expected to produce a crisis is shown by the presence of the chief officer of the cohort. Ver. 12. The Jewish hierarchy had no doubt communicated with Pilate, and his being ready to try the case at so early an hour as 5 A. M. may be accounted for in this way.—*Plummer*. Officers from the chief priests and Pharisees—That is, from the Sanhedrin. These may have been either officers of justice appointed by the Sanhedrin, or a portion of the Levitical temple police; that some of the latter were present is clear from Luke 22. 4, 52. This is a second part of the company. Luke (22. 52) tells us that some of the chief priests themselves were there also. Thus there were (1) Roman soldiers; (2) Jewish officials; (3) chief priests.—*Cambridge Bible*. With lanterns and torches—The ordinary equipment for night duty, which the Paschal full moon would not render useless. It was possible that dark woods or buildings would have to be searched.—*Plummer*.

II. DEFENDED. Verses 4-11.

4. Went forth—From what? (1) From the shade into the light; (2) from the circle of disciples; (3) from the depth of the garden; (4) from the garden itself. It is impossible to say which

Authorized Version.

5 They answered him, Je'sus of Naz'a-reth. Je'sus said unto them, I am *he*. And Ju'das also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Je'sus of Naz'a-reth.

8 Je'sus answered, I have told you that I am *he*. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

Revised Version.

5 They answered him, Je'sus of Naz'a-reth. Je'sus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Ju'das also, which betrayed

6 him, was standing with them. When therefore he said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the 7 ground. Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said,

8 Je'sus of Naz'a-reth. Je'sus answered, I told you that I am *he*: if therefore ye seek me, let these go

51 Pet. 3. 7.

of these suggestions is right; the last is not contradicted by verse 26. The kiss of Judas is by some placed here, by others after verse 8. While "his hour was not yet come" (7. 30; 8. 20), he had withdrawn from danger (8. 59; 11. 54; 13. 36); now he goes forth to meet it. He who had avoided notoriety (5. 18) and royalty (6. 15) goes forth to welcome death. Said—The better reading gives *saith*. His question, perhaps, had two objects: to withdraw attention from the disciples (4, 5), and to make his captors realize what they were doing.—*Plummer*. Jesus steps forward in firm majesty to meet the men who appear more like culprits to be arraigned than like officers coming to arrest him.—*Whedon*.

Christ's sufferings and death were voluntary. If he had never been fastened by any thing else than nails, he had never been fastened at all. It was love that led him to go to the altar, and love that fastened him to it.—*Beaumont*.

5. Jesus of Nazareth—Or, *Jesus the Nazarene* (Matt. 2. 23), a rather more contemptuous expression than "Jesus of Nazareth" (1. 46; Acts 10. 38; comp. Matt. 21. 11). "The Nazarene" in a contemptuous sense occurs 19. 19; Matt. 26. 71; Mark 14. 67. It is sometimes used in a neutral sense. Mark 10. 47; Luke 18. 87; 24. 19. Later on the contempt of Jews and heathen became the glory of Christians. Acts 2. 23; 3. 6; 4. 10; 6. 14.—*Plummer*. They have not the spirit to rush forward and seize him without a word of parley. The drill sergeant, however, mechanically answers, according to the warrant, "Jesus of Nazareth."—*Whedon*. I am *he*—The "he" is not expressed in the Greek; and "I am" to Jewish ears was the name of Jehovah. We have had the same expression several times in this gospel (4. 26; 8. 24, 28, 53; 13. 13). Judas, if not the chief priests, must have noticed the significant words. There is nothing in the narrative to show that either the whole company were miraculously blinded (Luke 24. 16) or that Judas in particular was blinded or paralyzed. Even those who knew him well might fail to recognize him at once by night and with the traces of the agony fresh upon him. Which betrayed him, stood—Literally, *who was betraying him* (ver. 2), *was standing*. This tragic detail is impressed on John's memory. In this, as in the lanterns and torches, which he alone mentions, we have the vividness of the eye-witness. Luke (22. 47) tells us that "Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him." Apparently after having done this he fell back and rejoined Christ's enemies, standing in the foreground.—*Plummer*.

6. As soon then as he had said—Better, *when therefore he said*. The evangelist intimates that what followed was the immediate consequence of Christ's words. Went backward, and fell—Whether this was the natural effect of guilt meeting with absolute innocence, or a supernatural effect wrought by Christ's will, is a question which we have not the means of determining. Moreover, the distinction may be an unreal one. Is it not his will that guilt should quail before innocence? The result in this case proved both to the disciples and to his foes that his surrender was entirely voluntary (10. 18). Once before the majesty of his words had overwhelmed those who had come to arrest him (7. 46); and it would have been so now had not he willed to be taken.—*Cambridge Bible*.

8. I have told you—An intimation to the armed crowd what playthings they might be in his hand.—*Whedon*. Let these—At first Jesus had gone forward (ver. 4) from his company as

Authorized Version.

9 That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, *Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

10 Then 'Si'mon Pe'ter having a sword drew it, and smote the high-priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Mal'chus.

11 Then said Je'sus unto Pe'ter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the *cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Je'sus and bound him,

13 And *led him away to *An'nas first; for he was father-in-law to Ca'ia-

Revised Version.

9 their way: that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one. Si'mon Pe'ter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high-priest's *servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the *servant's name was Mal'chus. Je'sus therefore said unto Pe'ter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

12 So the *band and the *chief captain, and the officers of the Jews,

13 seized Je'sus and bound him, and led him to An'nas first; for he was father-

* Chap. 17, 19; Jude 1. —† Matt. 26, 51; Mark 14, 57; Luke 22, 49. —‡ Matt. 26, 29; 26, 39, 42. —§ Matt. 26, 57. —|| Luke 2, 2; Acts 4, 6.

* Gr. *bond-servant*. —† Gr. *bond-servant*. —‡ Gr. *cohort*. —§ Gr. *military tribune*; Gr. *chiliarch*.

Judas from him. Judas had fallen back on his followers while the disciples followed up and gathered round Christ. Thus the two bands confronted one another.—*Plummer*.

9. Christ was bound to keep his disciples, both in body and in soul, for their future ministry. They were to be immortal until their work was done. He had preserved them not only from apostasy but from temporal death for the future mission before them. Judas, on the other hand, perished in body and soul, and so was completely "the son of perdition." And so now Jesus provides for their present safety in literal fulfillment of his claim that he had kept all and lost none—save one.—*Whedon*.

10. Then Simon Peter—*Simon Peter therefore* (ver. 8), because he "saw what would follow." Luke 22, 49. All four evangelists mention this act of violence; John alone gives the names. While Peter was alive it was only prudent not to mention his name; and probably John was the only one who knew (ver. 15) the servant's name. Peter's impetuous boldness now illustrates his impetuous words 13, 37, and Mark 8, 82.—*Plummer*. Having a sword—Probably one of the two produced in misunderstanding of Christ's words at the end of the supper. Luke 22, 38. To carry arms on a feast-day was forbidden; so that we have here some indication that the last supper was not the passover.—*Cambridge Bible*. The high-priest's servant—No doubt he had been prominent in the attack on Jesus, and Peter had aimed at his head. Luke also mentions that it was the *right ear* that was cut, and he alone mentions the healing, under cover of which Peter probably escaped.—*Plummer*.

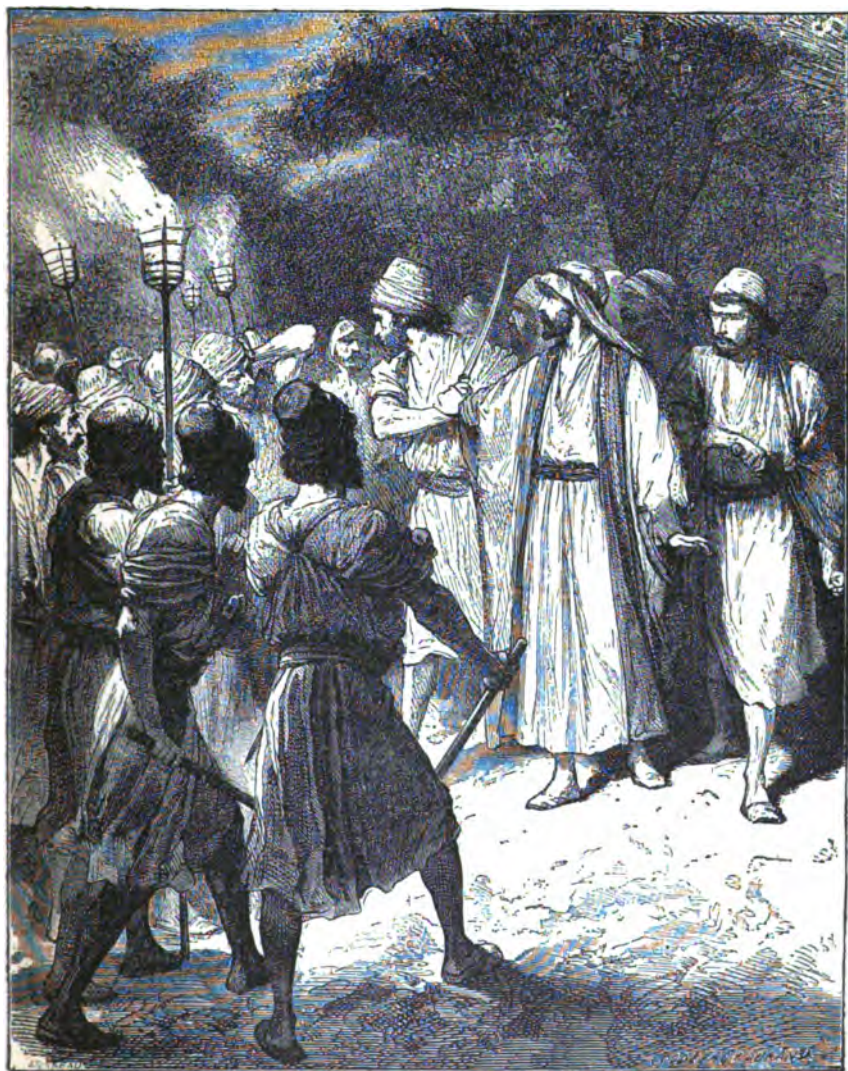
11. The cup—John alone gives these words. On the other hand, the Synoptists alone give Christ's prayer in the garden (Matt. 26, 39, etc.) to which they obviously refer. Thus the two accounts confirm one another. For the metaphor comp. Ps. 75, 8; 60, 3; Job 21, 20; Jer. 25, 15; Rev. 14, 10; 16, 19, etc. Matthew gives another reason for putting up the sword into its place, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (26, 52).—*Plummer*.

Love for enemies was abundantly exemplified by Christ. Vers. 10, 11. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

III. FETTERED. Verses 12, 13.

12. Then the band and the captain—*Therefore* (ver. 8) *the band*, etc., because of this violent attempt at resistance. The captain, or *chiliarch*, is the tribune or chief officer of the Roman cohort. The representations of the hierarchy to the Romans are confirmed by Peter's act; Jesus the Nazarene is a dangerous character who stirs up his followers to rebellion; he must be properly secured and bound. Perhaps also their falling to the ground on meeting him impressed them with the necessity of using the utmost caution, as with a powerful magician. The whole force is required to secure him.—*Cambridge Bible*.

13. To Annas first—Whether Annas was "chief" of the priests (2 Kings 25, 18), or president or vice-president of the Sanhedrin, we have no information. Certainly he was one of the



"THE CUP WHICH MY FATHER HATH GIVEN ME, SHALL I NOT DRINK IT?"

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
phas, which was the high-priest that same year.*	in-law to Ca'ia-phas, which was high-priest that year.

* And Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas the high-priest; ver. 24.

most influential members of the hierarchy, as is shown by his securing the high-priesthood for no less than five of his sons, as well as for his son-in-law Caiaphas, after he had been deposed himself. He held office 7-14 A. D., his son Eleazar 16 A. D., Joseph Caiaphas 18-36 A. D.; after him four sons of Annas held the office, the last of whom, another Annas (62 A. D.), put to death James, the first bishop of Jerusalem. The high-priests at this time were often mere nominees of the civil power, and were changed with a rapidity which must have scandalized serious Jews. There were probably five or six deposed high-priests in the Sanhedrin which tried our Lord.—*Plummer*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Periods of seclusion and prayer yield strength. **Vers. 1, 2.**—Whenever Michael Angelo, that "divine madman," as Richardson once wrote on the back of his drawings, was meditating on some great design, he closed himself up from the world. "Why do you lead such a solitary life?" asked a friend. "Art," replied the sublime artist, "is a jealous god; it requires the whole and entire man." During his mighty labor at the Sistine chapel he refused to have any communication with any person, even at his own house.—*Disraeli*.

Love for enemies was abundantly exemplified by Christ. **Vers. 10, 11.**—Some courtiers reproached the Emperor Sigismund that instead of destroying his conquered foes he admitted them to favor. "Do I not," he replied, "effectually destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?"

A little before Tetzels' death Luther, hearing of his anguish of mind, wrote to him in the most kind and consolatory strains, and begged him not to be distressed at the recollection of any thing that had passed between them.

The kindness of some is too much like an echo; it returns exactly the counterpart of what it receives, and neither more nor less.—*Bowen*.

TEACHING HINTS.

Arrange in order the events at the garden of Gethsemane, and form a connected story of: 1.) The agony of Christ. 2.) The awakened disciples. 3.) The coming of Judas and the band. 4.) The kiss of betrayal. 5.) Falling to the ground. **Vers. 4-8.** 6.) Peter and Malchus; the last miracle of Jesus. 7.) The seizure of Jesus. 8.) Peter and John following; the young man in a linen cloth. **Mark 14. 51, 52.** 9.) Before Annas.

We see here Jesus suffering wrong at the hands of men whom he had come to bless. Notice the spirit in which Jesus met the violence of his enemies and the treachery of his disciple.

1. The spirit of prayer. **Ver. 1.** He entered the garden, for what purpose John does not tell; but we learn from the other gospels that it was to pray. Prayer is the best preparation for approaching trial.

2. The spirit of foreknowledge. **Vers. 2-4.** Our troubles come unforeseen, and it is well for us that they do; but Jesus foreknew his, and looked forward to them. He saw the traitor long before his kiss pressed his cheek.

3. The spirit of power. **Vers. 5, 6.** There was such majesty in his appearance that his enemies fell upon their faces before him. This showed that he was the master of his own fate.

4. The spirit of fellowship. **Vers. 7-9.** In such times of suffering most men think of themselves. But Christ in his hour of betrayal thought only of his disciples, who had put their trust in him. May we not believe that even now he has the same care for those who love him?

5. The spirit of mercy. **Vers. 10, 11.** We see in this event Christ's attitude toward his enemies. The last miracle of Christ was wrought to heal one of the leaders among his foes. **Luke 22. 50, 51.**

6. The spirit of submission. **Vers. 12, 13.** He gave himself up to the power of his enemies, while he had full power to overcome them, simply because it was his Father's will.

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LESSON IX.—November 29.

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.—JOHN 19. 1-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification.—Rom. 4. 23.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Friday morning, probably April 7, A. D. 30.

PLACE.—The judgment hall of Pilate, Procurator of Jerusalem.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 27. 24-31; Mark 15. 15-20; Luke 23. 23-25.

Authorized Version.

1 Then 'Pilate therefore took Je'sus, and scourged him.

2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

Revised Version.

1 Then Pilate therefore took Je'sus,

2 and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a garment; and they came unto him,

¹ Isa. 50. 6; ² Matt. 20. 19; ²⁷ 26; Mark 15. 15; Luke 18. 23.

THE CROWN OF THORNS. Verses 1-7.

1. Then Pilate therefore—Because the attempt to release him in honor of the feast had failed, Pilate now tries whether the severe and degrading punishment of scourging will not satisfy the Jews. Scourged him—Scourging was legalized by Moses, but limited to forty lashes, which later Jews, to avoid an accidental overstepping of the law, limited to thirty-nine. Though not among the Jews a disgraceful punishment, it was held by the Roman law unworthy to be inflicted on a Roman citizen. The victim was bound to a low pillar in order that in stooping forward he might curve his bare back to receive the full fair stroke. It was customarily inflicted before crucifixion, and no limit was fixed by the Roman law to the number of the blows.—*Whedon*.

Moral cowardice is sinful. Pilate committed the greatest crime of history, when he would rather not have done so, because of fear; and yet doubtless as a Roman soldier he was physically brave. Most of our scholars are more in danger from moral cowardice than from real viciousness.

2. And the soldiers—Herod and his troops (Luke 23. 11) had set an example which the Roman soldiers were ready enough to follow. Pilate countenances the brutality as aiding his own plan of satisfying Jewish hatred with something less than death. The soldiers had inflicted the scourging; for Pilate, being only procurator, would have no lictors.—*Plummer*. A crown of thorns—The context seems to show that this was in mockery of a royal crown rather than of a victor's wreath. The plant is supposed to be the thorny *nabbe*, with flexible branches, and leaves like ivy, abundant in the Jordan valley and round about Jerusalem. A purple robe—Mark

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.	3 and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him ¹ with their hands.
4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.	4 And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find
5 Then came Je'sus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!	5 no crime in him. Je'sus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man!
6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.	6 When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no
¹ Chap. 18, 28; 2 Cor. 5, 21.—Acts 2, 13.	¹ Or, with rods.

has "purple," Matthew "scarlet," Luke is silent. "Purple" with the ancients was a vague term for bright, rich color, and would be used of crimson as well as of violet. The robe was a military *chlamys*, or *paludamentum*, perhaps one of Pilate's cast-off cloaks. The garment in which Herod had mocked Jesus was probably white. Comp. 1 Mac. 8. 14; 10. 20, 62. The scourging and mockery were very possibly visible to the Jews outside.—*Cambridge Bible*.

3. And said—The best authorities add a graphic touch not given by the Synoptists; and they kept coming unto him and saying. We see each soldier coming up in turn to offer his mock homage.—*Plummer*. Hail, King of the Jews—Like the procurator, they mock the Jews as well as their victim. Smote him with their hands—Literally, gave him blows, but whether with a rod, as the root of the word implies, or with the hand, as is more probable, we are uncertain.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Suffering is often the way to glory. Vers. 1-3. See ILLUSTRATIONS. No cross, no crown.

4. Went forth again—After Jesus returned from Herod Pilate again took him into the inner apartment; there the scourging took place, while the multitude still stood in the front court of the palace. Pilate now brings forth Jesus in his piteous plight, and, probably mounting the gallery or balustrade slightly projecting over the court, presents him in an elevated position to their view.—*Whedon*. I find no fault in him—Rather, ground of accusation I find none in him.

Christ's character stood crucial tests. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Pilate unconsciously uttered the verdict of the ages. Jesus committed no sins and made no blunders. He is our perfect Example as well as our Atoner.

5. Then came Jesus—Better, Jesus therefore came. The evangelist repeats the details of verse 2; they are details of a picture deeply imprinted on his memory. Whether or no he went into the Pretorium, he no doubt witnessed this scene.—*Cambridge Bible*. Behold the man—This solemn presentation of Jesus before the world, preceding his final delivery to death, has produced the most solemn impression upon the minds of the Church of all Christian ages. The pencils of the great masters of Christian art have selected it as a choice subject.—*Whedon*. Pilate appeals to their humanity. Surely no one can think that this man is dangerous or needs further punishment. When this appeal fails Pilate's pity turns to bitterness. Ver. 18.

6. When the chief priests . . . saw him—The leaders take the initiative to prevent any expression of compassion on the part of the crowd.—*Plummer*. Crucify him—Omit the pronoun, which is not in the Greek. The simple imperative better expresses the cry which was to give the cue to the multitude. According to all four evangelists the demand for crucifixion was not made at first, but after the offer to release Jesus in honor of the feast. Take ye him—Better, take him yourselves, as in 18. 31. We may admit that it ought to have been beneath the dignity of a Roman judge to taunt the people with a suggestion which he knew that they dare not follow; but there is nothing so improbable in it as to compel us to believe that the Jews had the power of

Authorized Version.

7 The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he 'made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pi'late therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Je'sus, Whence art thou? But 'Je'sus gave him no answer.

10 Then saith Pi'late unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Je'sus answered, 'Thou couldst have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

Revised Version.

7 crime in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made

8 himself the Son of God. When Pi'late therefore heard this saying, he was

9 the more afraid; and he entered into the 'palace again, and saith unto Je'sus, Whence art thou? But Je'sus

10 gave him no answer. Pi'late therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have 'power to release thee, and

11 have 'power to crucify thee? Je'sus answered him, Thou wouldest have no 'power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath

⁴ Lev. 24. 16.—⁵ Matt. 26. 65; chap. 5. 19; 10. 33.—⁶ Isa. 53. 7; Matt. 27. 12, 14; Acts 2. 22.—⁷ Luke 22. 53; chap. 7. 20; Acts 2. 22.

⁸ Gr. *Pretorium*.—⁹ Or, *authority*.—¹⁰ Or, *authority*.—¹¹ Or, *authority*.

inflicting capital punishment. Pilate is goaded into an exhibition of feeling unworthy of his office.—*Cambridge Bible*.

Our sins crucify Christ afresh. As Jesus stands the representative of suffering for sin, so these shouting "priests and officers" are the representative sinners.—*Whedon*. Every sinful emotion would clamor for the death of personified Purity.

7. We have a law—As procurator Pilate was bound by Roman precedent to pay respect to the law of the subject nationality. He has challenged them to take the law into their own hands; now let him hear what their law is.—*Plummer*.

II. THE JUDGMENT-HALL. Verses 8-12.

8, 9. He was the more afraid—An unexpected result followed their utterance of the phrase Son of God. There can be no doubt that the personal demeanor of Jesus had an impressive effect upon Pilate. He appeared to the Roman a strangely supernatural being. The warning dream of his wife hung gloomily upon his feelings. Skeptics are often superstitious. Genuine religious feeling often being suppressed in their hearts, abnormal spiritual notions take their place. He puts to himself the startling query, May there not be something supernatural in this remarkable specimen among this half-supernatural race? **Whence art thou?**—A most significant question. The skeptical and inquiring world has been asking it ever since. But "who shall declare his generation?" Isa. 53. 8.—*Whedon*.

There is a time to be silent. Ver. 9. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Jesus's reticence was not the result of either physical weakness or perverse temper. Silence at this juncture did more than any words could do. Let us learn from our patient Master. No uttered word can ever be recalled.

10, 11. Power to crucify . . . power to release—Another effort to understand this mysterious personality. Probably Pilate as yet intended to do neither; imprisonment was an easy cure for most social evils under the brutal Roman sway. But he presents the extreme possibilities to either terrorize or charm this unconquered prisoner. **Jesus answered**—This is Christ's last word to Pilate; a defense of the supremacy of God, and a protest against the claim of any human potentate to be irresponsible.—*Plummer*. The prisoner of Pilate is greater than Pilate himself. Again he asserts, what he asserted at his arrest (Matt. 26. 53), that his surrender was perfectly voluntary, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Only because it was accepted as a foreknown fact in the divine plan, and predicted in Scripture, does Jesus consent to Pilate's power.—*Whedon*. The point is not that Pilate is an instrument ordained for the carrying out of God's purposes (Acts 2. 23); he was such, but that is not the meaning here. Rather, that the



"THOU COULDEST HAVE NO POWER AT ALL AGAINST ME, EXCEPT IT WERE GIVEN THEE FROM ABOVE."

Authorized Version.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever *maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Je'sus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the He'brew, *Gab'ba-tha.

14 And ¹⁰it was the preparation of the passover: and about the sixth hour: and

Revised Version.

12 greater sin. Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king.

13 *speaketh against Cæsar. When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Je'sus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called. The Pavement, but in He'brew, Gab'ba-tha. Now it was the Prepara-

14 tion of the passover: it was about

* Luke 23. 2.—* Acts 17. 7.—* That is, elevated.—¹⁰ Matt. 27. 62.

* Or, oppose^h Cæsar.

possession and exercise of all authority is the gift of God (3. 27; Rom. 13. 1-7). **He that delivered me unto thee**—That is, *betrayed*. The reference is to Judas primarily; also, probably, to Caiaphas, the representative of the Sanhedrin and of the nation. **Hath the greater sin**—Because he had the opportunity of knowing who Jesus was.—*Plummer*.

12. And from thenceforth—Or, *Hereupon*; or, *For that reason*. Nothing now, apparently, would have prevented Pilate from releasing Jesus by a peremptory exertion of power; but the Jews, with surprising art, had reserved their master-stroke for this final period. Spare this man and you are yourself an undone man.—*Whedon*. Just how Pilate sought to release Jesus the evangelist does not tell us. **If thou let this man go**—The Jews once more shift their tactics, and from the ecclesiastical charge (ver. 7) go back to the political, which they now back up by an appeal to Pilate's own political interests. They know their man; it is not a love of justice, but personal feeling, which moves him to seek to release Jesus; and they will overcome one personal feeling with another still stronger.—*Plummer*. **Not Cæsar's friend**—The present Cæsar, or emperor of Rome, was the jealous, capricious, cruel Tiberius. Let him for a moment be made to suspect that a viceroy of his tolerates even the shadow of a rebel king, and that viceroy is a dead man. Pilate, in fact, three years after, committed suicide to escape punishment under charge of maladministration.—*Whedon*. **Speaketh against Cæsar**—In fact, declares himself a rebel; and for a Roman governor to countenance and even protect such a person would be high treason. The Jews, perhaps, scarcely knew how powerful their weapon was. Pilate's patron Sejanus (executed A. D. 31) was losing his hold over Tiberius, even if he had not already fallen. Pilate had already thrice nearly driven the Jews to revolt, and his character, therefore, would not stand high with an emperor who justly prided himself on the good government of the provinces. Above all the terrible *Lex Majestatis* was by this time worked in such a way that prosecution under it was almost certain death.—*Plummer*.

III. THE JUDGMENT-SEAT. Verses 13-16.

13. When Pilate therefore heard that saying—The remarkable craft of Caiaphas was fully appreciated by his contemporaries. He had read Pilate's character correctly. **Brought Jesus forth**—Though the examination may be in private, sentence must be pronounced in public. Thus we find that Pilate, in giving judgment about the standards which had been brought into Jerusalem, has his tribunal in the great circus at Cesarea, and Florus erects his in front of the palace (*Josephus*).—*Plummer*. **The Pavement**—Literally, *The Stone-paved*. *Josephus* says that it was covered with a tasselled pavement.

14. It was the preparation—The day before the Jewish Sabbath, that is, Friday, the day of crucifixion. As the Jewish Sabbath commenced on the evening of the preceding day, so the latter part of Friday was originally devoted to a preparation for the Sabbath. But, gradually, the time of preparation was extended, and finally the whole day became the preparation.—*Whedon*. **Of the passover**—It was the Sabbath-preparation in the Passover week. **About the sixth hour**—That is, toward noon. But Mark (15. 25) says it was the third hour when they crucified him. Attempts have been made to show this to be a contradiction. The "third hour" would be

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!	the sixth hour. And he saith unto
15 But they cried out, Away with <i>him</i> , away with <i>him</i> , crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar.	15 the Jews, Behold, your King! They therefore cried out, Away with <i>him</i> , away with <i>him</i> , crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered,
16 Then ¹⁹ delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Je'sus, and led <i>him</i> away.	16 We have no king but Cæsar. Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

¹¹ Gen. 49. 10; Ezek. 31. 26, 27.—¹² Matt. 27. 26, 31; Mark 16. 16; Luke 23. 34.

nine o'clock. But Mark does not say precisely that he was crucified at nine o'clock. He truly says that the preceding events brought it to nine o'clock, and after that they crucified him. The process resulting in his crucifixion commenced about nine o'clock, and John says the crucifixion took place, not exactly at twelve, but about that time. Precise measurement of time, brought about by modern science and accurate time-pieces, was unknown to antiquity.—*W hedon*. Behold your King—Like the title on the cross, and unlike the "*Eccæ homo*," these words are uttered in bitter irony. This man in his mock insignia is a fit sovereign for the miserable Jews. Perhaps Pilate would also taunt them with their own glorification of him on the recent day of his triumphant entrance to Jerusalem.

15. Shall I—Or, *must I*. There is a strong emphasis on King, which stands first in the original. Pilate begins (18. 38) and ends with the same idea, the one dangerous item in the indictment, the claim of Jesus to be King of the Jews. The chief priests—This depth of degradation was reserved for them. "The official organs of the theocracy themselves proclaim that they have abandoned the faith by which the nation had lived." Sooner than acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah they proclaim that a heathen emperor is their king. And their baseness is at once followed by Pilate's: sooner than meet a dangerous charge he condemns the innocent to death.—*Plummer*.

Dallying with duty often leads to fatal issues. See ILLUSTRATIONS. When the right course is clearly seen no innocent soul can delay to take it. If there be intellectual confusion as to which is the right course, a steady righteous purpose and a series of prompt decisions will inevitably lead past all blunders to the right outcome. The cardinal sin is dallying with temptation to do wrong.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Suffering is often the way to glory. Vers. 1-3.—The mockery of these strong, practical Romans was a symbol which they who did it little dreamed of. The crown of thorns proclaims a sovereignty founded on suffering. The scepter of feeble reed speaks of power wielded in gentleness. The brow that was pierced by the sharp scanthus wreath therefore wears the diadem of the universe. The hand that passively held the mocking of the worthless, pitiless reed therefore rules the princes of the earth with a rod of iron.—*MacLaren*.

In ancient times when a box on the ear given by a master to a slave meant liberty, little would the freedman care how hard was the blow. By a stroke from the sword the warrior was knighted by his monarch. Small matter was it to the new-made knight if the royal hand was heavy. The Lord makes his Jacobs to be prevailing princes, but he confers the honor after a night of wrestling, and accompanies it with a shrunken sinew. Yet who would wish to be deprived of the trials if they are the necessary attendants of advancement.—*Spurgeon*.

Christ's character stood crucial tests. Ver. 4.—Pilate found no fault in him. The Jews saw nothing but the hideous mists and phantoms of their own passions, their envy, hatred, and malice; they clothed Jesus in the dark hues of these passions. Loving unrighteousness, they tried to quench the light of righteousness, and could not rest until they had built up a thick firmament of darkness, and extinguished the heavenly ray which God had sent to scatter the darkness.—*Hare*.

The speculum of the largest telescope foils the optician's skill in casting. Too much or too

little heat, the interposition of a grain of sand, a slight alteration in the temperature of the weather, and all goes to pieces. Therefore when successfully finished it is a matter for the congratulation of a country. The perfection of Christ's character was of infinite importance to the whole race.—*F. W. Robertson.*

There is a time to be silent. Ver. 9.—A young man went to Socrates to learn oratory. On being introduced he talked so incessantly that Socrates asked for double fees. "Why charge me double?" said the young fellow. "Because," said the orator, "I must teach you two sciences: the one how to hold your tongue, the other how to speak." The first is the more difficult.

It would often be better to lose a pearl from a necklace than a word from the tongue. So long as you keep an important word it is your own. Utter it, and from that moment it belongs to all who heard it; and you need not wonder that they treat it as their property, adding to or taking from it according to their pleasure.—*Scriven.*

Silence never shows itself to so great an advantage as when it is made the reply to calumny and defamation, provided we give no just occasion for them.—*Addison.*

Silence is deep as eternity, speech shallow as time. In the midst of exasperating circumstances Christ answered "never a word." He who keepeth his tongue, the same is a perfect man.—*Carlyle.*

Dallying with duty often leads to fatal issues. Vers. 6-16.—Nero once tried to disgrace some of the great Roman nobles to as low a level as his own by making them appear as actors in the arena. The Roman noble regarded this as the extremest disgrace. Yet to disobey was death. Florus was so bidden, and, doubtful whether to obey or not, consulted the religious Agrippinus. "Go, by all means," replied Agrippinus. "Well—but," replied Florus, "you faced death rather than obey." "Yes," was the answer, "because I did not deliberate about it." The imperative "You must" should be implicitly and deliberately obeyed. To deliberate about it is to be a secret traitor, and the line which separates the secret traitor from the open rebel is thin as a spider's web.—*Canon Farrar.*

Nothing can be more destructive to vigor of action than resolutions adopted and rejected again and again. The man resolves he will undertake this enterprise, though Alps or oceans oppose. Wishing to know what others think he is met with laughter and frowns till his resolution crumbles down to the level of his associates. Such a man never belongs to himself. He belongs to whatever can capture him, and one thing after another vindicates its right to him, as twigs and chips floating near the edge of a river are intercepted by every weed and whirled in every eddy.—*Foster.*

TEACHING HINTS.

In opening the lesson, mention in order the five trials of Jesus. 1. Before Annas, a preliminary examination. 2. Before Caiaphas and the council. 3. Before Pilate. 4. Before Herod. 5. Before Pilate again, the final trial, described in the lesson.

One of the most famous paintings in the world, the "Ecce Homo," takes its subject from the words of Pilate, "Behold the man!" Let us look upon the man who is here presented to us.

1. **Behold a man!** It is as a *man* that we look upon Jesus now. We see him in our humanity. He is one of us. It is our brother who was scourged and mocked and crucified.

2. **Behold a suffering man!** Vers. 1-3. Scourged, crowned with thorns, spat upon, and mocked: he was a sufferer indeed. And there was a mental suffering harder still to bear—the consciousness that he was misunderstood and wronged.

3. **Behold an innocent man!** Ver. 4-6. Over and over again is his innocence declared by the very judge who sentenced him. This is the man whom we need for our model, one in whom no fault can be found.

4. **Behold a divine man!** Vers. 7-11. A man, yet claiming to be the Son of God, and proving his claim! Strange as the claim was, it has been accepted by the generations since; and now Jesus is hailed as Lord of all. To lift up men God came down to earth and assumed human flesh.

5. **Behold a crucified man!** Vers. 12-16. At last he is sent to the cross, but not for his own sins. He hangs thereon as a substitute, the innocent for the guilty. We have an interest in that cross, for thereon he died to save us.

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LESSON X.—December 6.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.—JOHN 19. 17-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—For Christ also hath once suffered for sins.—1 Pet. 3. 18.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Friday, April 6, 80 A. D.

PLACE.—Calvary, outside the walls of Jerusalem. The site has not been certainly identified. See Note on verse 17.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 27. 35-50; Mark 15. 24-37; Luke 23. 33-46.

Authorized Version.

17 And he bearing his cross¹ went forth into a place called *the place* of a skull, which is called in the He'brew Gol'go-tha:

18 Where² they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Je'sus in the midst.

Revised Version.

17 They took Je'sus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in He'brew Gol'go-tha: where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Je'sus in the

¹ Num. 16. 36; Heb. 12. 12.—² Isa. 53. 12; Dan. 9. 26; Gal. 3. 12.

I. THE CROSS. Verses 17-24.

17. Bearing his cross—John omits the help which Simon the Cyrenian was soon compelled to render, as also (what seems to be implied by Mark 15. 22) that at last they were obliged to carry Jesus himself.—*Plummer*. **Went forth**—The place of public execution appears to have been situated north of the city. It was outside the gate (Heb. 13. 12) and yet "nigh unto the city." Ver. 20. In the Mishna it is placed outside the city by a reference to Lev. 24. 14. It is said to have been "two men high." *Sanh.* vi. 1. The Jews still point out the site at the cliff, north of the Damascus gate, where is a cave now called "Jeremiah's grotto." This site has therefore some claim to be considered as that of the crucifixion. It was within two hundred yards of the wall of Agrippa, but was certainly outside the ancient city. It was also close to the gardens and the tombs of the old city, which stretch northward from the cliff; and it was close to the main north road, in a conspicuous position, such as might naturally be selected for a place of public execution.—*Conder*. **Of a skull**—Probably on account of its shape.

Christ endured a worse cross and suffered a worse shame for us than we can for him. Vers.

17, 18. See ILLUSTRATIONS. Doubtless the physical pains of our Lord were the least of his pains. The mystery of the agony, of the garden, and the cross, we cannot solve.

18. Two others—Robbers or bandits (not "thieves"), as Matthew and Mark call them, probably guilty of the same crimes as Barabbas. Jesus is crucified with them as being condemned under a similar charge of sedition and treason.—*Plummer*.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.	19 midst. And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.
20 This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Je'sus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in He'brew, and Greek, and Latin.	20 This title therefore read many of the Jews: 'for the place where Je'sus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in He'brew, and in Latin, and in Greek.
21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.	21 The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said,
22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.	22 I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.
23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Je'sus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part;	23 The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Je'sus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier

¹ Or, for the place of the city where Jesus was crucified was nigh at hand.

19. Pilate wrote a title—Pilate prepared this title, with the careful purpose of another and final sarcasm upon the Jews. It was probably borne upon the person of Jesus while going to execution, and then fastened upon the cross.—*Whedon*. The other three give the inscription thus: Matthew, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews;" Mark, "The King of the Jews;" Luke, "This is the King of the Jews."

20. Read many of the Jews—The nearness of the city, mentioned in the next words, and the variety of languages in which it was written, gave a wide notoriety to the inscription. Jerusalem and Judea are told that their king hangs upon the cross. They had threatened to make his unpunished claim of kingship a charge against Pilate before Cæsar; Pilate retorts by making that kingship an insult upon them before the world. He can now report to Cæsar that he has hung a king for them.—*Whedon*. Nigh to the city—Pictures are often misleading, in placing the city a mile or two in the background of the crucifixion. John's exact topographical knowledge comes out again here.—*Plummer*. Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin—The three representative languages of the world at that time, the languages of religion, of intellect, and of empire, were employed.

21. The chief priests . . . Write not—This betrayal of their feeling of the odiousness of the superscription affords Pilate the completeness of his triumph. He said—This would make Jesus's crime consist in making a treasonable claim.—*Whedon*.

22. Pilate answered—His answer illustrates the mixture of obstinacy and relentlessness which *Philo* says was characteristic of him. His own interests are not at stake, so he will have his way; where he had any thing to fear or to gain he could be supple enough. A shrewd, practical man of the world, with all a Roman official's contemptuous impartiality and severity, and all the disbelief in truth and disinterestedness which the age had taught him, he seems to have been one of the many whose self-interest is stronger than their convictions, and who can walk up-rightly when to do so is easy, but fail in the presence of danger and difficulty.—*Plummer*. I have written—In the true style of an imperious Roman he at once displays his arbitrary authority, maintains an immovable record, and attains a complete triumph over these Jews.—*Whedon*.

Christ's kingdom was foreshadowed in the crucifixion. Vers. 19-22. See ILLUSTRATIONS. There was the force of a prophecy in Pilate's declaration that Christ is King. Very strangely, long years before this the Septuagint had translated Psa. 96. 10 in this remarkable way, "The Lord reigned, from the tree." This was the awful hour when the King of glory truly ascended his throne.

23. His garments—The loose outer garment, or toga, with girdle and fastenings. This was large enough to be worth dividing, and in some cases was the only garment worn.—*Plummer*.

Authorized Version.

and also ~~his~~ coat; now the coat was without seam, ^awoven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, ^a'They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

25 Now there stood by the cross of Je'sus his mother, and his mother's sister,

Revised Version.

a part; and also the ^a'coat: now the ^a'coat was without seam, woven from

24 the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

They parted my garments among them,
And upon my vesture did they cast lots.

25 These things therefore the soldiers did. But there were standing by the cross of Je'sus his mother, and

a Or, wrought.—^a Psa. 22. 18.

Or, made.—^a Or, made.

Between this full statement of John and the briefer statements of Mark and Matthew there is variation, but no contradiction. By the Roman law the garments of the executed malefactor went as perquisites to the executioner. And thus here a Roman custom strangely comes in to fulfill an ancient Hebrew prediction.—*Whedon*. His coat—Better, *the coat or shirt*; it fitted somewhat close to the body, reaching from the neck to the knees or ankles.—*Cambridge Bible*. At this coat they arrived last, as being the under tunic or shirt. It was commonly worn by the priests, and consisted of two oblong pieces of cloth, fastened at the upper ends upon the shoulder with a clasp or buckle, and hanging down, before and behind, to the feet.—*Whedon*. Without seam—*Josephus* tells us that that of the high-priest was seamless, whereas in other cases this garment was commonly made of two pieces.

24. They said therefore—Amid the most solemn scene of human history, the unconscious actors sit down to gamble. Cast lots—Each man's name, token, or lot, was placed in some receiver, perhaps a helmet, and either the receiver was so shaken as to throw out a lot, or the lot was fortuitously drawn from the receiver. Scripture—Psa. 22. 18. This is one of the seven psalms which, as prefiguring the Messiah, are commonly called the Messianic Psalms. In this psalm David utters as of his own person sufferings he never endured, and glories too great for himself or any other merely human being. He undergoes the most terrible assaults from the most wicked and brutal of men, and through his deliverance brings about the conversion of the Gentiles to Jehovah. Hence the Jewish Church, as well as Christ and his apostles, held the psalm as describing the suffering Messiah. The fact that the Saviour's tunic was a single woven piece produced one of those literal fulfillments of the *very words* of prophecy by which its object is designated too plainly for the duller mind to fail of seeing. Thereby the application of the more figurative parts is more decisively fixed.—*Whedon*.

II. THE CHRIST. Verses 25-30.

25. Now there stood—Or, *But there were standing*. On the one hand, the four blundering soldiers with the centurion; on the other, the four ministering women with the beloved disciple.—*Cambridge Bible*. By the cross—The same feeling of safety which induced John to enter the high-priest's palace seems to have emboldened him, at the head of his female company, to make the nearest approach to the cross. No danger was to be apprehended from the Roman authorities who so reluctantly surrendered even Jesus to death. The only harm could arise from the malice of the multitude. It was probably just as the shades of the supernatural darkness were dense enough to obscure their approaching figures that they came within listening distance of the dying Saviour. Abruptly, and avoiding (perhaps for her safety) addressing her as mother, Jesus utters his last words to her.—*Whedon*. During most of the crucifixion the women had remained "afar off" as represented in our engraving. His mother's sister, Mary—The Greek, like the English, leaves us in doubt whether we here have two women or one; whether altogether there are four women or three. The former is much the more probable alternative. (1.) It avoids the



Authorized Version.

Mary the wife of Cleo-phas, and Mary Mag-da-le-ne.

26 When Je'sus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

28 After this, Je'sus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

Revised Version.

his mother's sister, **Mary, the wife of Clo'pas, and Mary Mag'da-le-ne.**

26 When Je'sus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

28 After this Je'sus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the Scripture might be accomplished,

¹ Or, Clopas; Luke 24. 18.—² Chap. 12. 23; 20. 2; 21. 7, 20, 24. ³ Chap. 2. 4.—⁴ Gen. 27. 19; chap. 1. 11; 16. 32.—⁵ Gen. 2. 15; Gen. 2. 1-3; 22. 1-21; Isa. 50. 6; 52.—⁶ Gen. 22. 21.

very improbable supposition of two sisters having the same name. (2.) John is fond of *parallel* expressions; "his mother and his mother's sister, Mary of Clopas and Mary Magdalene," are two pairs set one against the other. (3.) Mark (15. 40) mentions *Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less, and Salome*. *Mary Magdalene* is common to both narratives; "*Mary the mother of James the Less*" is the same as "*Mary of Clopas*;" the natural inference is that *Salome* is the same as "*his mother's sister*!" If this is correct (4.) John's silence about the name of "*his mother's sister*" is explained: she was his own mother; and he is habitually reserved about all closely connected with himself. We have seen already that he never mentions either his own name, or his brother's, or the virgin's. (5.) The very ancient Peshito or Syriac version adopts this view by inserting "and" before "*Mary the (wife) of Clopas*." *The wife of Cleophas*—Rather, *of Clopas*. The Greek is simply "the of Clopas," and "the daughter of Clopas" may be right, or "the mother," or even "the sister," but "wife" is more probably to be supplied. There is no reason for identifying Clopas here with Cleopas in Luke 24. 18; Clopas is Aramaic, Cleopas is Greek. The spelling Cleophasis a mistake derived from Latin manuscripts. All Greek authorities have Clopas. If "wife" is rightly inserted, and she is the mother of James the Less, Clopas is the same as Alpheus. Matt. 10. 3; comp. 27. 56. It is said that Clopas and Alpheus may be different forms of the Aramaic name.—*Cambridge Bible*. **Mary Magdalene**—Introduced, like the twelve (8. 67) and Pilate (18. 29), abruptly and without explanation, as being familiar to the readers of the gospel.

Love for others, Christ's ruling passion, was strong in death. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

26. **Whom he loved**—His garments, his last property, his foes have parted among themselves. His mother alone remaining, he placed her as a precious deposit, not with her sons, but with his best beloved disciple.—*Whadon*. **Behold thy son**—If John was the virgin's nephew, and if, as probable, Christ's "brethren" were the sons of Joseph by a former marriage, the fact that Christ committed his mother to her nephew and his own beloved disciple rather than to her step-sons requires no explanation. Even if his "brethren" were the sons of Joseph and Mary, their not believing on him (7. 5) would sufficiently account for their being set aside; and we have no evidence that they believed until after the resurrection. Acts 1. 14.—*Cambridge Bible*.

27. **From that hour**—Quite literally, as soon as all was over (ver. 30); or he may have led her away at once and then have returned (ver. 35).—*Nummer*. **Unto his own home**—Although the commendation was double, each being given to the other, yet (as was natural) John assumes the care of Mary rather than she of him. This shows the untenability of the view that not only John, but in him all the apostles, were committed by Christ to the guardianship of Mary. That John was known to the high-priest (18. 15) and that his family had hired servants (Mark 1. 20) would seem to imply that he was a man of some position and substance.

28. **After this**—That is, subsequent not merely to the event last narrated, but to all the events narrated. The last preceding event was the cry of Jesus, "Eloi, Eloi;" and the present furnishing of drink is parallel with Matt. 27. 43. **That the Scripture might be fulfilled**—

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.	29 saith, I thirst. There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth.
30 When Je'sus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."	30 When Je'sus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

⁹ Isa. 49. 21; Dan. 9. 24; chap. 17. 4; Rom. 10. 4; Heb. 10. 1-14. —¹⁰ 1 Thesa. 5. 10.

It must not be conceived that our Lord, in a servile way, directed his mind to the interpretation of Scripture in these agonizing moments; yet in a full, calm, glorious consciousness, he trod the path foreknown of God. He acts in the full spirit of Psa. 40. 7; "Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book is it written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God." Hitherto in the great agonies of his soul there had been little thought for the pains of the body.—*Whedon*.

29. Vinegar—Omit "now." John's precise knowledge appears once more. The other three do not mention the vessel, but he had stood close to it. The "vinegar" was probably the sour wine or *posca* in a large jar "set" by the soldiers for their own use while on guard. Criminals sometimes lived for hours, even a day or two, on the cross.—*Plummer*. **Hyssop**—The plant cannot be identified with certainty. The caper plant, which is as likely as any, has stalks which run to two or three feet, and this would suffice. It is not probable that Christ's feet were on a level with the spectators' heads, as pictures represent; this would have involved needless trouble and expense. Moreover, the mockery of the soldiers recorded by Luke is more intelligible if we suppose that they could almost put a vessel to his lips. John alone mentions the hyssop; another mark of exact knowledge.—*Cambridge Bible*. **Put it to his mouth**—The actors and their motive are left doubtful. Probably soldiers, but possibly Jews, and probably in compassion under cover of mockery (comp. Mark 15. 36).

30. Received—He had refused the stupefying draught (Matt. 27. 34; Mark 15. 23), which would have clouded his faculties. He accepts what will revive them for the effort of a willing surrender of his life.—*Cambridge Bible*. **It is finished**—The Messiah's work of redemption was accomplished; his Father's commandment had been obeyed; types and prophecies had been fulfilled; his life had been lived, and his teaching completed; his last earthly tie had been severed (verses 26, 27), and the end had come. The final "wages of sin" alone remain to be paid.—*Plummer*. **Bowed his head**—Another detail peculiar to the evangelist who witnessed it. **Gave up the ghost**—With words of voluntary surrender, furnished by Luke in the parallel passage.—*Whedon*. Matthew says, "he let go his spirit" (27. 50); John, "he gave up his spirit." None of the four says "he died." The other two have "he breathed out," and Luke shows clearly that the surrender of life was a willing one by giving the words of surrender, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." "No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself." It was the one thing which Christ claimed to do "of himself" (10. 18). Contrast 5. 30; 7. 28, 8. 28, 42.

The atonement was full, perfect and sufficient. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Christ endured a worse cross and suffered more shame for us than we can for him. Ver. 17, 18.—That sin should be atoned for by the sufferings of another, and that we should take up our cross, are ideas that dwell in human nature; they were so diffused among the savages that Leclercq believed some of the apostles must have reached the American continent.—*Bancroft*.

An intimate friend of Handel's called upon him just as he was in the middle of setting the words "He was despised" to music, and found the great composer sobbing with tears, so greatly had the passage affected him.

A suffering Christian who shrank from a prospect of prolonged anguish had a vision in which there appeared to be a minute crown twined here and there with thorns, and by its side one

posed wholly of large murderous acanthus spines such as probably composed the wreath of painful mockery pressed on the Saviour's brow. "I thought," said she, "some One seemed to say, '*I wore this for thee*'—pointing to the large heavy crown—'*wear thou thine for me.*'" Ever after she meekly endured her sufferings.—*Anna Shipton.*

We admire the spirit of a noble leader of the Crusaders who was offered a crown upon having conducted his followers to the confines of the Holy City. "No," said he, "I will not wear a crown of honor where my Master wore one of shame."—*Christian Age.*

Christ's kingdom was foreshadowed in the crucifixion. Vers. 19-22.—The King in his sovereignty ruled the heart of that penitent man from his cross, and while the crown shone athwart the smoke and the agony of the death, the King "opened the gates of the kingdom of heaven" when he said, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise!"—*Maclaren.*

What an empire opens on his vision! Heaven and earth, the Church militant, the Church triumphant, angels and archangels, saints and seraphs. "Upon his head are many crowns." "He is made head over all things," from the minutest to the mightiest.—*Macduff.*

When Mr. Dawson was preaching in South Lambeth, London, on the offices of Christ, he presented him as King of saints. He marshaled patriarchs, kings, prophets and apostles, martyrs and confessors of every age and clime to place the insignia of royalty upon the head of this King of kings. The audience was wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement and joined with the preacher in pealing out the Coronation hymn, "All hail, the power of Jesus' name!"—*Foster.*

On the door of the old mosque in Damascus, once a Christian church, but now ranked among the holiest of the Mohammedan sanctuaries, are inscribed these remarkable words: "THY KINGDOM, O CHRIST, IS AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM, AND THY DOMINION ENDURETH THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS." For twelve hundred years the inscription has remained unimpaired by time. What is it waiting for? Already a Christian church has been founded there, and the Gospel is winning its way to ultimate victory.

When the Twenty-second Legion returned from the siege of Jerusalem Titus sent it to the banks of the Rhine, and with it Crescensius, who was the first to carry the Gospel into these provinces. Thus God ordained that the men who pulled down the last stone of the temple upon the banks of the Jordan should lay the first of another and immovable one upon the banks of the Rhine.—*Victor Hugo.*

Love for others, Christ's ruling passion, was strong in death. Vers. 25-27.—John Wesley exhibited in his last moments a striking instance of the "ruling passion." He evidently supposed himself dismissing one of his assemblies. "*Now we have done,*" he said, "*let us all go.*"—*Denton.*

Dr. Arnold in one of his letters gives an account of a saintly sister. For twenty years disease confined her to a kind of crib. "And yet," he says, "I never saw a more perfect instance of the power of love and of a sound mind. She maintained throughout her early-formed resolution of *never talking about herself.*"

A Scotch corsair, having been attacked by some English vessels in 1512, defended himself with extraordinary courage. When mortally wounded he made one of his men bring him his hauberk, on which he played for their comfort and encouragement as long as his breath lasted.—*Percy.*

Even He that died for us upon the cross, in the last hour, in the unutterable agony of death, was mindful of his mother, as if to teach us that this holy love should be our last worldly thought—the last point of earth from which the soul should take its flight to heaven.—*Longfellow.*

The atonement was "full, perfect, and sufficient." Ver. 30.—According to an Oriental custom, when a debt had to be settled, either by payment or forgiveness, the canceled bond was nailed over the door of him that owed it, that all might see it was paid. So Jesus, our bondsman, comes forth with the long list of our indebtedness in his hand, and lifts it up where God and angels and men may see it canceled through his merits.

A bricklayer who had fallen from a great height was fatally injured. A minister on visiting him said, "My dear man, I fear you are dying; make your peace with God." "Why," said the dying man, "that was made eighteen hundred years ago, when Christ hung on the cross. He is my peace, and I am saved."

Rain and dew descend upon flinty rocks; trees throw away their fruit on spots where there

has never been a man. Wealth sufficient to enrich nations is buried beneath mountains and seas while millions are in want. Medicine for half the ills of life is shut up in plants while generations die. It is no objection to the universality of the atonement that all are not benefited by it. There are men coming after us who will appropriate the fruits, the wealth, the medicine. So with the death of Christ. Its benefits will one day be enjoyed by a wider circle.—*Dr. Thomas.*

TEACHING HINTS.

It would be well to call attention to the different localities suggested for the place Calvary, or Golgotha, but not to dwell long upon the subject. Draw a map and show a picture or two, and then proceed to the great theme of the cross of Christ.

1. *Notice its shame.* Ver. 17. The cross was a Gentile method of execution reserved for criminals of the lowest class. No other death was so shameful. When Jesus bore his cross his humiliation touched its lowest depth. "He humbled himself unto death, *even* the death of the cross." But observe, too, how the shame has become a glory. See 1 Cor. 2. 2 and Gal. 6. 14.

2. *Notice its prominence.* Ver. 18. Three crosses, and of the three that in the midst the most conspicuous. Such has the Crucified been ever since: the most prominent figure in history, the center of the world's notice. More people have spoken his name than any other name; more books have been written about him than about any other man. See John 12. 32; Phil. 2. 9-11.

3. *Notice its royalty.* Vers. 19-22. "The King!" Though written in mockery it stated a fact. That cross was a throne, and He who hung upon it has ruled the hearts of millions, and shall yet rule the world. See 1 Tim. 1. 17; Rev. 19. 16.

4. *Notice its fulfillment of prophecy.* Vers. 23, 24. A thousand years before a prediction had been made. John, who stood by the cross, noted its fulfillment. This is but one of the multitudinous instances in which Jesus accomplished the prophecies. One of the strongest evidences of the divine origin of the New Testament is found in the remarkable chain of prophecies concerning Christ of which it records the fulfillment. See Acts 10. 43; 1 Tim. 1. 10, 11.

5. *Notice its unselfish love.* Vers. 25-27. A dying man, suffering unutterable agony, he forgets himself and thinks only of others. This was the spirit of Christ throughout his life on earth. He came to earth, not for his own interest, but to bless others; and he lived and died blessing men. See Matt. 10. 28; John 18. 1.

6. *Notice its atoning death.* Vers. 28-30. "It is finished!" What was finished? Not merely his earthly life, but his redemptive work. He died that we might live. He gave up his life that we might enter into life. See John 17. 4; Gal. 2. 20.

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LESSON XI.—December 13.

CHRIST RISEN.—JOHN 20. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again.—Rom. 8. 34.

BACKGROUND OF THE LESSON.

TIME.—Sunday, April 8, A. D. 30.

PLACE.—Joseph's garden, near Jerusalem.

PARALLEL PASSAGES.—Matt. 28. 1-8, 52, 53; Mark 16. 1-8; Luke 24. 1-12.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.—The following seems to be the true harmony of the evangelical histories of the first announcement of the resurrection of Jesus. 1. The women in a body (Mary Magdalene in advance of the whole) approach the sepulcher. 2. Mary Magdalene, seeing the stone removed, and hastily concluding that the body has been abstracted, runs for Peter and John, thus separating herself from the rest of the women. 3. While she is thus gone the other women arrive at the sepulcher and see two angels, and depart to inform the disciples who reside at a distance. 4. While they are gone Peter and John run to the sepulcher, find it empty, and return to their own homes. 5. Mary Magdalene, having followed them to the sepulcher, stands outside weeping, and when Peter and John depart she sees first two angels and then Jesus, and, according to his command, departs to carry his message to the other apostles. 6. The women on their way—before their arrival at the abode of the apostles, but after the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene—have a sight of Jesus. 7. At last all the women, including Mary Magdalene, unite in relating their story to the incredulous apostles.—*Whedon*.

Authorized Version.

1 The ¹ first *day* of the week cometh Ma'ry Mag'da-le'ne early, when it ¹ was yet dark, unto the sepulcher, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Si'mon Pe'ter, and to the ² other disciple, whom Je'sus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him.

Revised Version.

1 Now on the first *day* of the week cometh Ma'ry Mag'da-le'ne early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from 2 the tomb. She runneth therefore, and cometh to Si'mon Pe'ter, and to the other disciple, whom Je'sus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and and we know not where they have

¹ Matt. 28. 1; Mark 16. 1; Luke 24. 1.—² Chap. 13. 22; 19. 26; 21. 7, 20.

I. AN EMPTY SEPULCHER. Verses 1-10.

1. The first day—The united narratives seem to imply that Mary Magdalene was at the start decidedly in advance of the company of women. Throughout she manifests a high tone of character, and an earnest impetuosity, both of thought and manner, marks all her demeanor.—*Whedon*. The stone taken away—All four gospels note the displacement of the stone; Mark alone notes the placing of it, and Matthew the sealing.—*Cambridge Bible*.

The resurrection of Christ is a bulwark of his Church. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

2. She runneth—She waits neither to examine the sepulcher nor to consult the other women; nor can she calmly walk, but *runs* to the chief apostles for aid. It is evident that Peter and John abide at no great distance from the sepulcher, and separately from the other apostles. They are in west Jerusalem, while the others are probably in Bethany.—*Whedon*. Simon Peter—He was a man of such strong personality—so truly a born leader—that despite his ignoble fall it is natural in an emergency to turn to him. They have taken—She does not attempt to determine who, whether friends or foes. We know not—This “we” possibly implies that other women had been with her, as stated by the other evangelists.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
3 Pe'ter ^a therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher.	3 laid him. Pe'ter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they
4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Pe'ter, and came first to the sepulcher.	4 went toward the tomb. And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Pe'ter, and came first to
5 And he stooping down, <i>and looking in</i> , saw ^a the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.	5 the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying;
6 Then cometh Si'mon Pe'ter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie.	6 yet entered he not in. Si'mon Pe'ter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he
7 And ^a the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.	7 beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but
8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed.	8 rolled up in a place by itself. Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, which came first to the tomb,
9 For as yet they knew not ^a the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.	9 and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the

^a Luke 24. 12.—^a Chap. 19. 42.—^a Chap. 11. 44.—^a Psa. 16. 10; Matt. 16. 21; Acts 13. 24.

3. **And came**—Literally, *And they were coming toward the sepulcher.*

4. **So they ran**—More exactly, *But they began to run.* Did outrun—Literally, *ran on more quickly than*, probably as being much the younger man.

We should be earnest in seeking Christ. Vers. 3, 4. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

6. **Then cometh**—Better, *Simon Peter therefore cometh*, because John has remained standing there in awe and meditation. Peter, with his natural impulsiveness, goes in at once. Both apostles not characteristically.—*Plummer.* **Seeth**—Or, *beholdeth*. That is, takes a complete survey, and hence he sees the "napkin," which John in his short look had not observed.

7. **About his head**—Literally, *upon his head*. There is no need to mention his name. The writer is absorbed in his subject. **Wrapped together in a place by itself**—That the clothes and napkin were carefully folded and deposited indicated that there had been no violence or pil-lage.—*Whedon.*

8. **Then went in**—He is encouraged by his older companion. Note how all the details tell of the eye-witness; he remembers even that the napkin was folded. Contrast the want of detail in Luke 24. 12.—*Plummer.* **He saw and believed**—Believed what? Some say he believed *just what he saw*, namely, that the sepulcher was empty by the absence of the body. But this is making the apostle say a very insipid thing. The word *believes* is often used by the apostle without an object expressed, to designate some advance in embracing the main truths of Christianity. That he was fully convinced of the resurrection of Christ by what he saw as he had not previously been by the understanding of the Scriptures, is clearly implied by the next verse. But while John was convinced, Peter, though John does not say it, is amazed and sorely perplexed at the strange concurrence of events. See Luke 24. 12.—*Whedon.*

9. **They knew not the Scripture**—John's belief in the resurrection was as yet based only on what he had seen in the sepulcher. He had nothing derived from prophecy to help him. The candor of the evangelists is again shown very strongly in the simple avowal that the love of apostles failed to grasp and remember what the enmity of the priests understood and treasured up. Even with Christ to expound Scripture to them the prophecies about his passion and resurrection had remained a sealed book to them. Comp. Luke 24. 25-27.—*Plummer.* **He must**—Comp. 3. 14; 12. 34; Matt. 16. 21; 26. 54; Mark 8. 31; Luke 9. 22; 17. 25; 22. 37; 24. 7, 26, 44.

Lack of thorough knowledge of God's word involves us in darkness. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.	10 dead. So the disciples went away again unto their own home.
11 But 'Ma'ry stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher,	11 But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the
12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Je'sus had lain.	12 tomb; and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of
13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.	13 Je'sus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not
14 And 'when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Je'sus standing, and 'knew not that it was Je'sus.	14 where they have laid him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Je'sus standing, and knew not that it was Je'sus.
<small> ¹ Mark 16. 5.—² Song 2. 2, 4; Matt. 23. 9; Mark 16. 9.— ³ Luke 24. 16, 31; chap. 31. 4. </small>	

10. Went . . . unto their own home—It might not have been safe for them to remain long at the sepulcher. Their own home may have been the abode of John and the blessed mother, and we have Peter in the western margin of Jerusalem.—*Whedon*.

II. A WEEPING WOMAN. Verses 11-13.

11. But *Mary*—That is, Mary Magdalene. She had returned to the sepulcher after the hurrying apostles. Mark 16. 9 states definitely, what we gather from this section, that the risen Lord's first appearance was to Mary Magdalene; the details of the meeting are given by John alone.—*Cambridge Bible*. *Mary stood without*—While Mary has gone to the chief disciples, the other women have come to the sepulcher, seen the angels, and gone on their message to the other apostles. Mary follows the two runners to the sepulcher, and while they go in she stands without weeping.—*Whedon*. *Stood, or, continued standing*, after the other two had gone.—*Plummer*. *As she wept*—Half uncovering her face and momentarily looking in.

12. In *white*—It is asked sometimes whence did Jesus obtain his resurrection clothes? We might with the same wisdom ask, Whence did these angels obtain their robes of white? Who manufactures the angels' harps or Gabriel's trump? These angels assume not only bodies visible to mortal eyes, but vestments, and vestments which, by a mysterious law of mind, represent among different nations exaltation and purity. White as a color for magistrates and candidates was used by the Egyptians, Romans, and Persians. As an emblem of purity and holiness it was adopted by the Jews, and is recognized as a symbol in Scripture. See Rev. 3. 4, 5; 4. 4; 7. 9, 13; 15. 6; 19. 8, 14. In assuming the robe of white, therefore, the angels announced, in symbol, their true holy and exalted character. *At the head . . . at the feet*—As the two cherubim sat at the ark of the covenant watching the Shekinah. He who was so lately hung between two thieves is now lying between two angelic watchers.—*Whedon*.

13. *Woman*—A perfectly respectful address.—*Whedon*. See on 2. 4; 19. 26. The extreme simplicity of the narrative, it may be added, reflects something of the solemn majesty of the scene. The sentences follow without any connecting particles till ver. 19. Comp. 15.—*Westcott*. *They have taken away*—It may be that she supposed Joseph had intended the sepulcher to be but a temporary abode for the body, and had intended to remove it to some other place.—*Whedon*.

III. A RISEN CHRIST. Verses 14-18.

14. And *when*—Perhaps she becomes in some way conscious of another presence.—*Plummer*. *Knew not that it was Jesus*—Her eyes, doubtless, being half covered with weeping, she did not fully glance at him until she fully turned round, at verse 16.—*Whedon*.

Authorized Version.

15 Je'sus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Je'sus saith unto her, Ma'ry. She turned herself, and saith unto him, "Rab-bo'ni; which is to say, Master.

17 Je'sus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to "my brethren, and say unto them, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to "my God, and your God.

18 "Ma'ry Mag'da-le'ne came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

Revised Version.

15 Je'sus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Je'sus saith unto her, Ma'ry. She turned herself, and saith unto him in He'brew, Rab-bo'ni;

17 which is to say, "Master. Je'sus saith to her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.

18 Ma'ry Mag'da-le'ne cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and *how* that he had said these things unto her.

¹⁵ Song 2. 8. —¹⁶ Ps. 22. 22; Matt. 28. 10; Rom. 8. 9; Heb. 9. 11. —¹⁷ Comp. 16. 28; 1 Pet. 1. 3. —¹⁸ Eph. 1. 17. —¹⁹ Matt. 28. 10; Luke 7. 10.

¹ Or, Teacher. —² Or, Take not hold on me.

15. **Supposing him to be the gardener**—The superintendent of Joseph's grounds, in which the sepulcher belonged.—*Whedon*. **I will take him away**—In her loving devotion she does not measure her strength. Note that throughout it is "the Lord," (ver. 2), "my Lord" (ver. 18), "him" thrice (ver. 15), never "his body" or "the corpse." His lifeless form is to her still himself.—*Cambridge Bible*.

16. **Mary**—The term of general address, "Woman," awoke no echo in her heart; the sign of personal knowledge and sympathy comes home to her at once.—*Plummer*. **Turned herself**—For her face had not been toward the supposed gardener.—*Whedon*. **Saith unto him**—We must add, with the best authorities, *in Hebrew*. The insertion is of importance as indicating the language spoken between Christ and his disciples. John thinks it well to remind Greek readers that Greek was not the language used. Comp. Acts 22. 2; 28. 14. The expression here used occurs only in this gospel (ver. 2, 19, 18, 17, 20) and in Revelation (9. 11; 16. 16).—*Cambridge Bible*. **Rabboni**—In her ecstasy her native Hebrew dialect comes first to her lips.—*Whedon*. More exactly, *Rabbuni*. This precise form occurs also in Mark 10. 51, but has been obliterated in the Authorized Version. It is said to be Galilean, and if so, natural in a woman of Magdala. Could any but a Jew of Palestine have preserved this detail?—*Plummer*.

17. The word *touch* here never signifies, as some interpret it, *to embrace*. That she, like the other women (Matt. 28. 9) kneeling to him, embraced his knees, has no authority from any word of the evangelists. She had the testimony of two of her senses, sight and hearing, that it was the Lord; and she now seeks the testimony of a *third*, namely, of *feeling*, in order to be sure that it is a body and not a pure spirit which addresses her. Our Lord forbids her *touch*, that she may not lose the honor of her pre-eminence of faith. He tests that faith by a command which she obeys, and stands first of faithful witnesses. You see me arisen, Mary, according to Scripture prediction and to my promise; stop not to doubt, but bear the intelligence to the apostles.—*Whedon*. This is a passage of well-known difficulty. The force of the word *for* and what immediately follows is not easily found. But the true meaning of the entire lesson is not altered by any interpretation of this incident. Let us press this larger thought on the attention of our scholars.

18. **Came and told the disciples**—And so formed one of the band of female witnesses, summed up by Luke 24. 10, who testified only to be disbelieved.—*Whedon*. The personal history of Mary Magdalene must always be largely a matter of conjecture to the Christian Church, but her strong mental and moral traits are noticeable at every turn.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

The resurrection of Christ is a bulwark of his Church. Ver. 1.—An unbeliever has said with a sneer, "It is upon an empty tomb that the Christian Church is founded." He might have said more on that point had he considered it longer, for *it was on the discovery of the fact that the tomb was empty* that Mary's trembling love sprang into triumphant faith.

A French infidel was determined to uproot Christianity and found a system of his own that should supersede it. His efforts proved a disappointment. He came to Talleyrand and asked his advice. "O," said Talleyrand, "go and be crucified and then raise yourself from the grave the third day."

The heathen sorrowed without hope. A shattered pillar; a ship gone to pieces; a race lost; a harp lying on the ground with snapped strings—were the utterances of their grief. That the column was transferred to another building, that the bud was not crushed but transplanted to a kindlier soil, that the harp was not broken but handed to a truer minstrel—these things had no place in their dreams.—*H. Bonar.*

We should be earnest in seeking Christ. Vers. 3, 4.—Plutarch, in the life of Phocion, tells us of a certain gentlewoman of Ionia who showed the wife of Phocion all the rich jewels and precious stones she had. She answered her, "All my riches and jewels are my husband Phocion." So Christ is the wealth of the true Christian.

A poor peasant on the Welsh Mountains year after year through a long period of declining life used every morning to open his casement window toward the east to see if Jesus Christ was coming. He was no student of prophecy, but he was earnest, or he would not have been in such haste; he loved, or it would not have been the first thought of the morning.—*Fry.*

A minister preached on the text, "He brought him to Jesus;" and after he was through his little girl told him she liked the sermon. "And whom will you bring to Christ?" She answered, "I will bring myself first."—*Lorens.*

What would the world be without Jesus? We picture the day of judgment by storms above and earthquakes underneath, the sun and moon darkened, the stars falling, fire raging over the earth, and men calling on rocks and mountains to fall on them. We add to the picture every wildest unchaining of the elements. Yet the misery of such a day would have less of real terror in it than the earth without Jesus would have. An earth without happiness or hope, the past a burden, the present a weariness, the future a terror!—*Faber.*

Lack of thorough knowledge of God's word involves us in darkness. Ver. 9.—A gifted lady, noted for biblical scholarship, was in Sweden, and, though she knew but little of the language, she read her Swedish Bible daily. One morning she came to the passage, "Search the Scriptures," and found that the first word of that passage was one which the Swedish-English Lexicon defined as "ransack." This means search up and down, high and low, from left to right, and in the corners and by-places. Such study will save from many blunders.

The truths of the Bible are like gold in the soil. Whole generations walk over it and know not what treasures are hidden beneath. So centuries of men pass over the Scriptures and know not what truths lie under the feet of their interpretation.—*Beecher.*

Many people read the Bible as the hedgehog gets grapes. This animal rolls over among the grapes and carries off what happens to stick to its spines. So your hedgehoggy readers roll themselves over and over in their Bibles and declare that whatever sticks to their spines is Scripture and that nothing else is.—*Ruskin.*

TEACHING HINTS.

Give a brief outline of the events connected with the resurrection of Christ; but do not take the time requisite for a discussion of their order, which is very uncertain. Tell the story of this interview, and show in it the traits of the risen Christ.

We know what were the traits of Jesus while he was living among men; his gentleness, his love, his power. He entered the grave, and rose from it again. Did he leave in the tomb the characteristics of his humanity? Does he bear now upon the throne the same nature which he bore upon the earth? Notice what traits were shown in this event after his resurrection.

1. **There was power.** Vers. 1-10. The broken seal, the rolled-away stone, the garments placed in order, show the presence of superhuman power, which laughed to scorn the might of the world. Matt. 28. 19.

2. **There was sympathy.** Vers. 11-15. Notice that the first words spoken by Jesus after his resurrection were words of sympathy with a sorrowing woman. He had felt for human woe before, he felt it then, and we may be sure that he feels it still.

3. **There was recognition.** The river of death did not wash away his memory of persons. The friends whom he had known before he knew after his resurrection and called by name: "Mary," "Simon," "Thomas." He knows now each one of his followers on the earth. Let this encourage us to trust that hereafter we too shall know, even as we are known. 1 Cor. 13. 12.

4. **There was authority.** Ver. 17. He gave his command to Mary expecting obedience. He is still the supreme head of his Church, with all authority in his hands. Eph. 1. 19-23.

5. **There was brotherhood.** Ver. 17. "Go to my brethren." Now that he is about to leave his disciples he calls them "brethren." Heb. 2. 11.

6. **There was divinity.** Ver. 17. Even while he calls himself our brother, he calls God his Father, thus again asserting his divine nature. Heb. 1. 1-5.

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LESSON XII.—December 20.

THE RISEN CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES.—JOHN 21. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.—Col. 3. 1.

TIME AND PLACE.—Some weeks after the resurrection, in Galilee, at the Sea of Tiberias.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

This Epilogue (the twenty-first chapter) to a certain extent balances the Prologue, the main body of the gospel in two great divisions lying in between them; but with this difference, that the prologue is part of the original plan of the gospel, whereas the Epilogue is not. It is evident that when the evangelist wrote 20. 30 he had no intention of narrating any more "signs." The reason for adding this appendix can be conjectured with something like certainty; the evangelist wished to give a full and exact account of Christ's words respecting himself, about which there had been serious misunderstanding. In order to make the meaning of Christ's saying as clear as possible, John narrates in detail the circumstances which led to its being spoken. The whole of the chapter is peculiar to John's gospel. It falls into four parts. 1. *The Manifestation to the Seven and the Miraculous Draught of Fishes* (1-14.) 2. *The Commission to Peter and Prediction as to his Death* (15-19). 3. *The Misunderstood Saying Respecting the Evangelist* (20-23). 4. *Concluding Notes* (24, 25).—Plummer.

Authorized Version.

1 After these things Je'sus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Ti-be'ri-as; and on this wise showed he *himself*.

2 There were together Si'mon Pe'ter, and Thom'as called Did'y-mus, and 'Na-than'a-el of Ca'na in Gal'i-lee, and 'the sons of Zeb'e-dee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Si'mon Pe'ter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

1 Chap. 1. 45.—2 Matt. 4. 21.

Revised Version.

1 After these things Je'sus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Ti-be'ri-as; and he manifested

2 *himself* in this wise. There were together Si'mon Pe'ter, and Thom'as called 'Did'y-mus, and Na-than'a-el of Ca'na in Gal'i-lee, and the sons of Zeb'e-dee, and two other of his disciples. Si'mon Pe'ter saith unto

them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took noth-

1 That is, Tiber.

I. IN THE SHIP. Verses 1-3.



TOWER AND SEA OF TIBERIAS.

1. **Showed himself**—Better, *manifested himself*. **Again**—This (as ver. 14 shows) points back to the manifestation to Thomas and the rest (20. 26). **Sea of Tiberias**—John alone uses this name. The return of the disciples from Jerusalem to Galilee is commanded in Matt. 28. 7; Mark 16. 7. They returned to Jerusalem soon, and remained there from the ascension until Pentecost. Acts 1. 4. Matthew notices only the appearances in Galilee, Luke (and Mark) only those in Jerusalem. John gives some of both groups.—*Plummer*.

2. **There were together**—Probably all seven belonged to the neighborhood; we know this of four of them. **Thomas**—All particulars about him are given by John. **Nathanael**—The descriptive addition "of Cana of Galilee" occurs here only. John alone mentions Nathanael. **The sons of Zebedee**—If one of the sons of Zebedee were not the writer, they would have been placed first after Peter, instead of last of three named. The omission of their names also is in harmony with John's reserve about all closely connected with himself.—*Cambridge Bible*. Two others—Probably these nameless disciples are not apostles.

3. **Simon Peter**—As so often, he takes the lead. In the interval of waiting for definite instructions the disciples have returned to their usual employment. Once more we have precise and vivid details, as of an eye-witness.—*Cambridge Bible*. The impulse which moved Peter to lead off in this fishing excursion is not even hinted, whether it were recreation, pleasant reminiscences of former pursuits, subsistence, or spare time not otherwise filled. It does not appear that the Lord rebuked the movement.—*Cowles*. **That night**—Better, *in that night*. "That" perhaps indicates that failure was exceptional; or it may mean "that memorable night." Comp. 19. 31; 20. 19. Night was the best time for fishing. Luke 5. 5.—*Plummer*. **Caught nothing**—Their catching nothing, the presence of Jesus, and their rare success at his command are clear repetitions of the former transaction. The transaction that now ensues is a re-enactment and enlargement of their first call to follow Jesus, after a similar miracle. That miracle presaged their future office under Christ's living guardianship; this miracle prophetically promises a guardianship of the ascended Christ over his faithful ministry, and their final attainment to the everlasting shores.—*Whedon*.

Failure at first is the common lot of Christ's fishers. His presence again causing success after failure might bring home to them the lesson that apart from him they could do nothing (15. 5).—*Plummer*.

Calling may be missed; effort misapplied. Vers. 1-3. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

Authorized Version.

4 But when the morning was now come, Je'sus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Je'sus.

5 Then 'Je'sus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore; and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Je'sus loved saith unto Pe'ter, It is the Lord. Now when Si'mon Pe'ter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and 'did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from

Revised Version.

4 ing. But when day was now breaking, Je'sus stood on the beach: howbeit the disciples knew not that it was Je'sus. Je'sus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye sought to eat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7 for the multitude of fishes. That disciple therefore whom Je'sus loved saith unto Pe'ter, It is the Lord. So when Si'mon Pe'ter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were

¹ Chap. 20. 14.—² Luke 24. 41.—³ Or, Sirs.—⁴ Luke 5. 4. ⁵ 7.—⁶ Chap. 18. 23; 20. 2.—⁷ Song 8. 7.

II. ON THE SHORE. Verses 4-8.

4. Morning was now come—*Dawn was breaking. But—Nevertheless, or howbeit; implying that this was surprising. Comp. 4. 27; 7. 13; 12. 42; 20. 5. Knew not that it was Jesus—The distance, and the dimness of the morning light, might account for their not knowing him. The narrative intimates that our Lord maintained a supernatural reserve, so that his apostles could scarce discern his identity.—Whedon.*

Jesus often comes to us in the hour of defeat and dejection. Ver. 4. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

5. Children—Perhaps a mere term of friendly address; not the affectionate term used 13. 33.—*Plummer. Chrysostom* says our Lord addresses them as though he were one who wanted to buy fish.

They answered him, No. The question was to bring out their complete failure preparatory to his giving the command that would insure success. It is when we have fully realized our own insufficiency that we receive of the fullness of Christ.—*Whedon.*

6. He makes and announces his choice that they might see that the result was produced by his will and power. He directs them with a persuasive power by which they are induced to make the trial he directs.—*Whedon. They cast therefore—Perhaps they thought the stranger saw fish on the right side. Fish are at times seen "in dense masses" in the lake.—Plummer.*

Faith obeys, in spite of past experience or present appearances. Ver. 6. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

7. Therefore—The similarity of the transaction to the former miraculous draught of fishes now awakens in John a closer scrutiny of the stranger's person, and he pronounces, *It is the Lord.* Faith often produces love, and love often produces faith. Faith and love produce in John, but a regular action; in impulsive Peter they work a bold, irregular performance.—*Whedon. Therefore that disciple—The characteristics of the two apostles are again most delicately yet clearly given. Comp. 20. 2-9. John is the first to apprehend; Peter the first to act.—Cambridge Bible. His fisher's coat—A light, short, linen, armless frock, usually flung over the other dress or undress.—Whedon. It was his upper garment, which he gathered round him "with instinctive reverence for the presence of his Master."—Westcott. Naked—Undressed of his ordinary apparel. The word naked is used in both classical and biblical writings.—Whedon. No one but an eye-witness could have thought of the touch in ver. 7, which exactly inverts the natural action of one about to swim, and yet is quite accounted for by the circumstances.—Sanday.*

8. The other disciples (Peter excepted) come—not in a little ship, as if it might be some other

Authorized Version.

land, but as it were two hundred cubits; dragging the net with fishes.

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Je'sus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Si'mon Pe'ter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty-three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Je'sus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Revised Version.

not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net

9 full of fishes. So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Je'sus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken.

11 Si'mon Pe'ter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many

12 the net was not rent. Je'sus saith unto them, Come, and break your fast. And none of the disciples inquire of him, Who art thou? know-

81 Kings 19, 4.—9 Acts 10, 41.

9 Or, a fire of charcoal.—10 Or, a fish.—11 Or, a loaf.—12 Or, aboard.

little ship coming to their help—but in the little ship—the same in which they had been fishing all night—dragging their burden.—*Cowles*. Peter swam and they navigated to the shore. Dragging the net with fishes—The net was doubtless of that kind which, with the first end attached to the boat, extended in a large circuit into the sea, and, coming round, is fastened by the other end to the shore. As the boat approached the shore the circle of the net narrows and the inclosed fish are gradually brought to the shore. The net is sunk at the lower edge by weights, and sustained at the upper edge by corks, so as to form a perpendicular net-work for the fish encompassed by it. Two hundred cubits—But a hundred and thirty-two yards.—*Whedon*.

III. BY THE FIRE. Verses 9-14

9. The divine power of the Lord, which had just collected the fishes from the different parts of the lake to the right side of the boat, may have concentrated the elements of fire, fuel, and food from any part of creation upon that shore. Jesus, therefore, was wanting in no power to furnish the means and material of this emblematic feast. So he who upon the high ground of heaven watches his ministry and Church will in due season have full power to provide an eternal banquet and bring his elect to its participation.—*Whedon*.

10. Fish—The same word as in verse 9, but in the plural.—*Cambridge Bible*.

11. Went up—The meaning probably is "went on board" the vessel, now in shallow water. The details in this verse are strong evidence of the writer having been an eye-witness; he had helped to count these "great fishes," and gives the number, not because there is any thing mystical in it, but because he remembers it.—*Cambridge Bible*. A hundred and fifty, and three—This reckoning presents no number of mystical signification. But it does intimate that the fishes were each worthy of a count, and that the whole was a lot to rejoice at. Symbolically that the finally saved will each be accounted great and worthy in the eye of the Saviour.—*Whedon*. This great success must have been sweetly suggestive of the promise, "I will make you fishers of men." Ye shall know the difference it makes to have the presence of your Lord, and may estimate the blessedness of having him "always with you even to the end of the world."—*Cowles*. Not the net broken—In the former miraculous draught the net began to break. So the earthly Church is often distracted and torn by false members, by sins, and by schisms; but the Church of the advent will be an unbroken Church.—*Whedon*.

12. Come and dine—Or, as it was the morning meal, it might better be rendered, come and breakfast.—*Whedon*. None durst ask . . . knowing—A mixture of perplexity, awe, and conviction. They are convinced that he is the Lord, yet feel that he is changed, and reverence restrains them from curious questions. Comp. Matt. 2:8; 10:11. The writer knows the inmost feelings of the apostles. Comp. 2:11; 17:22; 4:27, 33; 6:21; 9:2; 20:20; 11.—*Cambridge Bible*. It seemed an impertinence to ask when they knew so well. A strange feeling of

Authorized Version.	Revised Version.
13 Je'sus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.	13 ing that it was the Lord. Je'sus cometh, and taketh the *bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.
14 This is now ¹⁰ the third time that Je'sus showed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead.	14 This is now the third time that Je'sus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

¹⁰ Chap. 20. 19, 26.

* Or, loaf.

profoundest awe seems to have blended with tender affection and fascinating interest in such a presence.—*Cowles*.

13. Taketh bread . . . and fish likewise—Of course this is not the fish that had just been caught, and nothing is told us as to how it was provided. The food is a gift from the Lord to his disciples.—*Plummer*. That Je'sus should take his usual place at the head of the table, breaking bread and distributing to them as of old, was indeed (estimated from Oriental usage, or from the usages of any people) tenderly kind and assuring—a precious guaranty of undying affection.—*Cowles*. In all their future wants and deprivations, both of body and of soul, these disciples might call to mind this meal, and feel assured that on the shores of the promised land they had a sure and ever faithful Provider.—*Whedon*.

The reward of Jesus will compensate for all. Vers. 9-13. See ILLUSTRATIONS.

14. This is now the third time—The two previous manifestations are probably those related 20. 19-23, 26-29; but we have not sufficient knowledge to arrange the different appearances in chronological order.—*Plummer*. Christ manifested himself at least ten times after he arose from the dead. 1. He appeared to Mary of Magdala. Mark 16. 9; John 20. 11-17. 2. To the women who came from the tomb. Matt. 28. 9, 10. 3. To the two disciples who went to Emmaus. Luke 24. 13-35. 4. To Peter alone. Luke 24. 34. 5. To the ten, in the absence of Thomas. Luke 24. 36-43; Mark 16. 14; John 20. 19-24. 6. Eight days after to the eleven, Thomas being present. John 20. 26-29. 7. To the seven, mentioned in verse 2 of this chapter. John 21. 1-24. 8. Besides these seven appearances he showed himself to the disciples on a certain mountain in Galilee. Matt. 28. 16-20. 9. If the appearance mentioned by Paul (1 Cor. 15. 6) to upward of five hundred brethren at once be not the same with his appearance on a mountain in Galilee it must be considered the ninth. 10. According to the same apostle he was seen of James (1 Cor. 15. 7), which may have been the tenth appearance. 11. And after this to all the apostles, when, at Bethany, he ascended to heaven in their presence. See Mark 16. 19, 20; Luke 24. 50-53; Acts 1. 3-12; 1 Cor. 15. 7.—*A. Clarke*.

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE USE OF TEACHERS.

Vocation may be missed; effort misapplied. Vers. 1-3.—As soon as the weather would permit the Jamestown colonists began to stroll about the country, digging for gold. In a bank of sand some glittering particles were found, and the whole settlement was in a blaze of excitement. Fourteen weeks of the precious spring-time that ought to have been given to plowing and planting were consumed in this stupid nonsense. Even the Indians ridiculed the madness of the men who for imaginary grains of gold were wasting their chances for a crop of corn.—*Bispath*.

One man proves a miserable failure in the study of the law who might have flourished in that of physics or divinity. Another runs his head against the pulpit who might have been very serviceable to his country at the plow. And a third proves a very dull philosopher who might have made a good mechanic, and done well enough at the useful philosophy of the spade or the anvil.—*South*.

Jesus often comes to us in the hour of defeat and dejection. Ver. 4.—"A bruised reed will he not break." The ancient shepherds amused themselves with the music of a pipe of reed or straw; and when it was bruised they broke it, or threw it away as useless. Not so the divine Shepherd of souls. The music of broken sighs is all the broken reed can afford him; the notes are but low and jarring; and yet he will repair the instrument till it is fit to join in the concert of angels.—*President Davis*.

Mark how the hand comes to the defense of the eye in its weakness; and how the eye with its sight and from its elevated position keeps watch for the welfare of the lowly, blind, but useful foot. The mutual helpfulness of these members is absolutely perfect. How much greater the knowledge, sympathy, and quick responsiveness of Jesus for the weak and suffering members of his body—the Church.—*Arnol.*

In the sublime fresco of Heliadorus by Raphael, Onias, the high-priest, is seen in the depths of the sanctuary beseeching Jehovah to intercede miraculously for the defense of his own chosen altar, and while he is still supplicating a celestial horseman descends from the skies and overthrows the sacrilegious robber. To his assistance also come two angels, cleaving the air with rapid flight, who whip with rods the discomfited bandit. If celestial squadrons do not visibly interpose for us we may be assured help will come and our victory prove as certain.—*Bishop Fallows.*

Faith obeys in spite of past experience or present appearances. Ver. 6.—The Scripture puts a flat opposition between faith and sense. "We walk by faith, not by sight or sense." They are two buckets—the life of faith, and the life of sense; when one goes up the other goes down; the higher faith rises the lower sense descends in its influence on our enterprises.—*Bridge.*

An obedient soul is like a crystal glass with a light in the midst, which shines forth through every part thereof. A man sincerely obedient lays such charge upon all his faculties as Mary did upon the servants at the feast, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Eyes, ears, hands, heart, body, and soul are made subservient to the higher will.—*Brooks.*

I have known a timid traveler, whose route lay across the Higher Alps along a path no broader than a mule's foothold, that skirted a dreadful precipice, shut her eyes and not attempt to guide the course nor touch the bridle. And there are times in the believer's life when the only thing is to lay the bridle on the neck of providence and trustfully obey God.—*Guthrie.*

When a Scottish chieftain desired to summon his clan he slew a goat, and, making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in fire and extinguished them in the blood. This was delivered to a swift messenger, who ran to the next hamlet, gave it to the principal person, with a single word implying the place of rendezvous. He sent it to the next village, and so on till the whole district was summoned. At sight of the *fiery cross* every man was obliged to shoulder arms or suffer the extremities of fire and sword.—*Sir Walter Scott.* The bare word of Jesus ought to be more influential with his followers.

The reward of Jesus will compensate for all. Vers. 9-13.—In the Church of St. Nazaro, Florence, is an epitaph on the tomb of a soldier, fit for the whole race: "Johannes Divultius, who never rested, rests—hush!"—*Munger.*

One should go to sleep at night as home-sick passengers do, saying, "Perhaps in the morning we shall see the shore." To us who are Christians it is a delightful thought that nothing but the opaque bodily eye prevents us from beholding the gate which is just open before us, and nothing but the dull ear prevents us from hearing the ringing of those bells of joy which welcome us to the heavenly shore.—*Becher.*

TEACHING HINTS.

One of the most beautiful scenes in the life of Christ is that presented in this lesson. If the teacher can read the story as told by John Ruskin, in his *Modern Painters*, describing and criticizing Raphael's famous cartoon, he will be better able to tell it to his class. To present the complete event and its teachings, the lesson should be extended to include verse 19.

I. We find here what the risen Christ gives to his followers.

1. *Direction.* Vers. 4-6. The incident of the net was a parable of the disciples' work for souls. Toiling alone and unguided they fail; under the direction of the Master they win multitudes.

2. *Sustenance.* Vers. 7-14. The food of which the disciples partook was furnished by their Saviour; an image of the daily supply which we receive from Christ.

3. *Restoration.* Vers. 15-17. If any one of the disciples might expect to be cast off by Christ, that one was Simon Peter. But the Saviour seeks him out, calls him home, and recommissions him as an apostle.

4. *Knowledge.* Vers. 18, 19. Death, to most men, is a dreadful necessity. But Christ gives to his followers such a revelation of it as transforms it into an honor, "glorifying God."

¶1. We find also what Christ expects of his followers.

1. *He expects work.* Vers. 4-14. He who would follow Christ must work for him. The true disciple is a fisher of men.

2. *He expects obedience.* Vers. 4-14. The disciple must do his work in that way which the Master commands.

3. *He expects love.* Vers. 15-17. Jesus craves the personal affection and devotion of every follower. "Lovest thou me?" is his question to us as well as to Peter.

4. *He expects care for others.* Vers. 15-17. The disciple is to feed the flock and nurture the lamb, regarding others no less than himself.

5. *He expects consecration.* Vers. 18, 19. The disciple should be ready to glorify God, whether by life or by death.

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ILLUSTRATIONS OF TEMPERANCE LESSONS.

We should be total abstainers for our health's sake. We put a drop of alcohol into a man's eye. It poisons it. We try it upon the lining of a living stomach. It poisons it. We study after death the stomachs of drinking men, and find that alcohol produces in regular stages redness, intense congestion, morbid secretion, destruction of parts, utter ruin. We study its influence upon the health and strength of sailors and soldiers, and find it helps to dress them in the arctic regions and exhaust them in the tropics. We watch two regiments on a long march in India, one with and the other without grog, and are driven to the conclusion that even moderate quantities of alcohol weaken the muscles and break the endurance. We visit the training grounds of oursmen and pedestriana, and learn every-where the same lesson—it is poison to muscle and brain.—*Dio Lewis*.

The index-finger of the century points toward the constitutional prohibition of the liquor traffic. Six propositions embody its principles. 1. The evil it seeks to remove is "the giant crime of crimes" against society. 2. Its superior practical benefits over any other form of anti-liquor policies have been demonstrated wherever it has had a fair trial. 3. Its principle has been sanctioned by the highest civil tribunals of the land as sound and just. 4. It is in harmony with soundest political economy. 5. It is based on the best and most advanced medical science. 6. It is in harmony with the purest philanthropy of the nineteenth century.—*Dr. Dorchester*.

A physician was walking along the road one day, when he met an old man who had a bottle of whisky sticking out of his coat pocket. "Is this the way to the poor-house, sir?" asked the old man, pointing in the direction in which he was walking. "No, sir," said the physician; "but this is," laying his hand on the bottle of whisky.

An English underwriter at Lloyds remarked: "One half our losses at sea might be prevented. Captains and helmsmen often get so muddled with drink that ships are stranded or lost."

Of every hundred paupers, seventy-five are made so by drink. Out of every hundred lunatics, fifty are made so through drink. Seventy per cent. of the divorces and ninety per cent. of the crimes are traced to the same source. Ruined reputations, shattered constitutions, and un-

ILLUSTRATIONS OF TEMPERANCE LESSONS.

Many deaths come in under the same category. These are but some of the present results of one thing of sin. The wages of all sin is death to every thing that is worth having.

Webb, the celebrated walker, drank nothing but water. He was one day recommending his regimen to a friend who loved wine, and urging him to quit a course of luxury by which his health and intellect would be destroyed. The gentleman appeared convinced, and promised to conform to his counsel, though he declared he could not leave off strong liquors at once, but by degrees. "By degrees!" exclaimed Webb; "if you should fall into the fire would you caution your servants to pull you out only by degrees?"

Henry M. Stanley testifies that the late Dr. Livingstone was a total abstainer during his residence in Africa, and that he himself in three and one half years' sojourn in that torrid climate did not drink ten tablespoonfuls of *Héquet*, and was nine months in the wildest part of Africa without a symptom of disease.

Dr. Purkes, who passed through the Ashantee campaign of 1874, says: "The reviving effects of alcohol on the soldiers passed off after two and a half miles' march, and was succeeded by greater languor than before. When again resorted to its reviving power was less marked, and the narcotizing influence shown in the dullness, unwillingness to march, and loss of cheerfulness of the men."

Dr. Norman S. Kerr, one of the highest British medical authorities, says, "The drinking of two glasses of sherry in twenty-four hours compels the heart to undergo additional work equivalent to the person having to lift three and one half tons one foot high. I have been able to trace three fourths of all my cases of disease of the heart to alcohol."

When S. C. Hall was traveling in Ireland he was astonished to find that in his daily bill of expenses there was one frequently-recurring item. "Refreshments for horse, twopence." "What is the meaning of this?" he inquired. "O, sir," was the reply, "that is for whip-cord." A very good example of what stimulants do, in imparting no new element of strength but making the victim use up what he has. When the school-boy runs behind his companion and administers a prick with an unsuspected pin, an immense amount of energy is liberated. The two boys confront each other and struggle until exhausted. As they drag homeward they see rushing toward them a maddened bull, and, although before scarcely able to crawl, they now perform a prodigy of fleetness. The whip gave no strength to the horse; neither the sin nor the fear of the bull infused any new force into the boys. The same is true of all stimulants.—*Dr. H. S. Paterson*.

"Champagne," said a friend to *Richard Cobden*, "is a drink for the gods." "Yes," replied the great orator and statesman, "because the gods have nothing to do. I find that the less wine I drink the more work I can do."

The *United Kingdom Insurance Company* gives the death-rate of the general section (which includes moderate drinkers) as seventeen per cent higher than the abstaining section.

Dr. B. W. Richardson has altered his designation of alcohol. Instead of the "devil in solution" he calls it the "mother of narcotics." He has renounced tobacco, for he thinks that if alcohol deserves to be hanged the weed deserves to be transported for life.

Love to the children, to our country, and to Christ, ought to constrain us to be abstainers and workers in the temperance cause. "I will tell you," said a gentleman to a friend, "how much it cost me to open my eyes on this subject. I commenced housekeeping with a bountiful supply of liquors; I continued in this way until my son became a drunkard. Then my eyes were opened."

A little boy was told by his father to fetch him beer. The boy said, "Please, father, don't send me to the public-house; I'm one of Newman Hall's Band of Hope boys." The father repeated his order. The boy said, "I'll go if you tell me to, but I wish you wouldn't." Then, taking a sixpence out of his pocket, he said, "I've been saving my coppers till I've got this, father, and I'll give it you if you won't send me." The father's eyes watered, and he said, "No, my boy, I won't send you, and the next time I'll go with you to your meeting." Mr. Hall saw him hiding behind a pillar at the next meeting, got him to sign the pledge, and he became an altered man.

While a British officer was once urging a native of India to examine the claims of Christianity, two drunken English soldiers passed. "See," said the native; "do you wish me to be like that! As a Mohammedan I could not; as a Christian I might. If we see one of our own number drunk we say he has left Mohammed and gone to Jesus."—*Gough*.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF TEMPERANCE LESSONS.

An Eastern fable runs thus: "A dervish was one day traveling in Tartary. There suddenly appeared to him the presiding spirit of the place, who said, 'O dervish, I am commissioned by the demons to inform you that you are destined to commit one of three great sins, murder, adultery, or drunkenness, but as a great favor you are permitted to choose which.' The dervish thought as to which would be the least criminal, and elected the sin of drunkenness. While drunk he committed the other two sins."

When a young man Abraham Lincoln signed the pledge. In manhood he said this step saved him from the fate that ruined nearly every one of his youthful comrades. In 1860 when a committee visited him at his home in Springfield, Ill. to notify him of his nomination as President, he ordered a pitcher of water and glasses, "that they might drink each other's health in the best beverage God ever gave to man." "Let us," he continued, "make it as unfashionable to withhold our names from the temperance pledge as for husbands to wear their wives' bonnets in church, and instances will be as rare in one case as the other."

A noble epitaph is upon *John B. Gough's* monument. It was written by himself and placed upon his tomb at his own request. "I can desire nothing better for this great country than that a barrier high as heaven should be raised between the unpolluted lips of the Christian and the intoxicating cup; that every-where men and women should raise strong and determined hands against whatever will defile the body, pollute the mind, or harden the heart against God and his truth."

The tale fashioned by the genius of a heathen is true. Having made the model of a serpent he fixed it in the bottom of a cup. Coiled for the spring, a pair of gleaming eyes in its head, and in its open mouth fangs raised to strike, it lay beneath the ruby wine. Nor did he who raised the golden cup to quaff the delicious draught, suspect what lay below, *till, as he reached the dregs, that dreadful head arose*. So, when unwilling lips are draining the bitter dregs of sin, shall rise the ghastly terrors of judgment upon the soul.—*Guthrie*.

INDEX.

- Activity, benefits incalculable (Ill.), 72, 76.
 Affection, strength of (Ill.), 89, 94.
 Alcibiades, anecdote of, 86.
 Alexander the Great, anecdote of, 80, 88, 85.
 Angels, 65, 66.
 Appearance of evil, avoid, 57.
 Boe, mathematical exactness of (Ill.), 29.
 Book of the law, 225.
 Bruce, anecdote of, 104.
 Bunting, Jabez, story of, 108.
 Business principles, 195.
 Callgula, anecdote of, 83.
 Carnal vision, 120.
 Carraoci, anecdote of, 96.
 Castaway, danger of becoming (Ill.), 33, 38.
 Character governs (Ill.), 81, 84.
 Chastisement for our good, 223, 249.
 Children, instruction of, 117.
 Children of God, 304.
 Christ and the Blind Man, 310.
 Christ as a friend, 328.
 Christ at the feast, 299.
 Christ before Pilate, 366.
 Christ betrayed, 361.
 Christ comforting, 341.
 Christ crucified, 372.
 Christ foretells his death, 350.
 Christ our central theme, 247.
 Christ, prayer of, for his disciples, 355.
 Christ raising Lazarus, 324.
 Christ risen, 379, 384.
 Christ the brew of life, 292.
 Christ the center of humanity, 333.
 Christ the good shepherd, 315.
 Christ the light of the world, 245.
 Christ, the mind of, 336.
 Christ the true vine, 346.
 Christ, unchanging love of, 336.
 Christ, working for, 331.
 Christian experience, 249.
 Chronological notes, 21, 22, 42, 78, 87.
 Church a safeguard, 217.
 Comforter, promises of, 341.
 Common sense the handmaid of religion, 66.
 Companionship, beware of bad, 23.
 Concentration of purpose, 108.
 Conscience makes cowards, 117.
 Consequences of moral action inexorable, 64.
 Cook, Joseph, on illiteracy, 95.
 Cromwell, anecdote of, 75.
 Crucifixion of Mammoth Cave blind (Ill.), 30.
 Delay is dangerous (Ill.), 25, 30.
 Deserts in the East, 65.
 Despondency arising from physical causes (Ill.), 65, 75.
 Destiny, each soul works out its own, 23.
 Disciples, first, 252.
 Doubt, the folly of (Ill.), 101, 104.
 Drinking vessels, ancient, 44.
 Earnestness will not save (Ill.), 54, 59.
 Early impressions endure (Ill.), 33, 38.
 Earthly ties must be severed (Ill.), 92, 97.
 Eddystone light-house, 112.
 Elijah and the prophets of Baal, 52.
 Elijah at Horeb, 63.
 Elijah taken to heaven, 87.
 Elijah the Prophet, 43, 50, 51, 98.
 Elijah's fast, 66.
 Elisha's desire to be like Elijah (Ill.), 92, 96, 110.
 Experience a final test, 58.
 Experience, other people's, should be learned from (Ill.), 25, 30.
 Extravagance of idolatry, 54.
 Failure, what should follow it, (Ill.), 28, 31.
 Faith in time of trouble (Ill.), 107, 111.
 Faith takes away fear, 142, 329.
 Famine in Samaria, 151.
 Felix of Nola, anecdote of, 145.
 Five thousand fed, 286.
 Folly of spiritual unbelief (Ill.), 54, 59.
 Forethought, exercise of, 33.
 Frederick the Great, anecdote of, 145.
 Gehazi, 128, 186, 189.
 Generosity rewarded (Ill.), 50.
 Gentleness, the virtue of (Ill.), 107, 111.
 Gloom, indulgence of, wrong (Ill.), 65, 75.
 God a hiding-place, 141, 145, 146.
 God answers prayer, 38.
 God cannot tolerate idolatry, 203.
 God enjoins care for the poor, 195.
 God changes not (Ill.), 100, 103, 104.
 God chooses unlikely instruments, 46.
 God, communion with, gives strength, 43.
 God, distrust of, 40.
 God, fulfills himself exactly (Ill.), 23, 29.
 God guides (Ill.), 100, 104.
 God loveth a cheerful giver, 47.
 God moves in a mysterious way, 116.

INDEX.

- God recognizes followers, 73.
 God will provide (III.), 45, 48, 100, 104.
 God works by the use of means, 110.
 God's love for us, 45, 244, 70.
 God's works justify his claims, 128.
 Godliness is profitable (III.), 102, 104.
 Godliness with contentment is great gain, 79.
 Golden calves worshiped, 84.
 Good people meet great reverses (III.), 65, 74.
 Grace, sufficient, 308.
 Gratitude should be practical, 128.
 Greatness has its penalties (III.), 70, 75.
 Grossest, anecdote of, 125.
 Harvest, large from small sowing, 83, 89.
 Haydn, anecdote of, 87.
 Heaven's dawn sometimes foreseen (III.), 66, 68.
 Heaven fully compensates for all earthly trials (III.), 88, 94, 241.
 Henry VIII., anecdote of, 103.
 Hesitancy shows weakness of character, 26.
 Hezekiah the good king, 219.
 High places, 87.
 Hill, Roland, anecdote of, 89.
 Holy Spirit, 861.
 Horses and chariots, angelic, 148.
 Humility, 387.
 Idolatry in Israel, 32.
 Indian legend, 95.
 Indians, American, anecdote of, 94.
 Individual responsibility, 88, 80, 70, 255.
 Iron Age, anecdote of, 86.
 Israel, captivity of, 265.
 Jahu, character of, 159.
 Jerusalem, fall of, 231.
 Johnson, Dr., anecdote of, 125.
 Jonah sent to Nineveh, 166.
 Jordan, Elijah crossing the, 91.
 Jordan, washing in, 119, 120.
 Judah, captivity of, 231.
 Kingdom of God, 25, 83, 268.
 King of Spain, anecdote of, 83.
 Knowledge is power (III.), 89, 95.
 Knox, John, anecdote of (III.), 48.
 Lamb of God, 254.
 Latimer, Bishop, anecdote of, 80.
 Lavater, anecdote of, 84.
 Leadership, how to choose the right, 101.
 Legend, a Mohammedan, 42.
 Leprosy, 127.
 Leprosy a type of sin, 115.
 Leprosy, indications of, 187.
 Lincoln, anecdote of, 61.
 Lord Bacon, anecdote of, 123.
 Love leads to obedience, 341.
 Luther, anecdotes of, 60.
 Mantle of Elijah, 31, 60.
 Mamluk, anecdote of, 114.
 McDonald of Dunblane, anecdote of, 83.
 Miller, Hugh, anecdote of, 125.
 Mitchell, the astronomer, anecdote of, 145.
 Moral compromise a blunder (III.), 88, 89.
 Moscow, the synod of, 112.
 Mount Carmel, 52.
 Mud, products of, 188.
 Müller, anecdote of, 126.
 Naaman healed, 113.
 Naaman's conversion, 123.
 Napoleon, anecdotes of, 50, 59, 84, 96, 144.
 Neglect always brings loss (III.), 28, 30.
 Nelson, anecdote of, 60.
 New birth, 286.
 Nicodemus, 284.
 Nimrod, legend of, 95.
 Nineveh's repentance, 177.
 Numbers not every thing (III.), 54.
 Oberlin, anecdote of, 112.
 Opportunities, redeeming, 117.
 Oxygen, its threefold forms, 76.
 Passion blinds men (III.), 64, 71.
 Penance is not pleasing to God, 55.
 Penalties of disobedience to God are sure (III.), 83, 89.
 Pictures in the Pitti palace, 103.
 Pitt, William, anecdote of, 103.
 Pleasures of this world discounted, 103.
 Political difficulties in ancient Israel, 33.
 Pope Pius V., anecdote of, 82.
 Prayer cannot dispense with labor, 110.
 Prayer, its true character, 55.
 Prayer the Christian's strength, 148.
 Priests, false, 37.
 Privation should lead us to God (III.), 42, 43.
 Prophets of Baal, 53.
 Prophets, sons of the, 30.
 Protecting providences (III.), 48.
 Prosperity, worldly, does not satisfy (III.), 79, 83.
 Providence guides us step by step, 39, 117.
 Prudence better than valor (III.), 64, 74.
 Race prejudices, 131.
 Rain-tree of South America, 194.
 Rank shadowed by care (III.), 83, 88.
 Raphael, anecdote of, 102.
 Rectitude is rare, 78.
 Reformers must suffer (III.), 64, 70.
 Rehoboth, causes of the revolt from, 23, 29.
 Religion dreaded, 33, 86.
 Religion, half-way measures in, 130.
 Results, the greatest, come from small causes (III.), 23, 30.
 Righteousness' sake, persecution for (III.), 64, 73.
 Righteousness used as a virtue, 37.
 Rule, he that will, must serve (III.), 25, 30.
 Sabbath breaking, 195.
 Safety in heaven, 93.
 Samaria, fall of, 205.
 Samaritan woman, 273.
 Savonarola, anecdote of, 123.
 Scarcity of Bibles, 196.
 Scotch thimble, anecdote, 60.

INDEX.

Self-sacrifice the secret of success (Ill.), 109, 110, 332.	Springs of life, reforms must begin at, 103.	Turning-points in life demand especial care (Ill.), 23, 29.
Shakels, gold and silver, 117.	Spurgeon, anecdote of, 84.	Tyndall, anecdote of, 104.
Shunammite's son, 106.	Stael, Madame de, her influence, 83.	Unity, importance of, 57, 60.
Signet rings and seals, 78, 80.	Staff, the prophetic, 108, 109.	Washing feet, 336.
Silence the most effective sympathy (Ill.), 89, 95.	Stanley, H. M., anecdote of, 96.	Waterloo, delay at (Ill.), 20.
Silence, the virtue of, 89.	Strength is always calm (Ill.), 27, 30.	Watts, Dr., anecdote of, 125.
Siloam, pool of, 312.	Symbolism in worship a danger, 84.	Wellington, anecdote of, 59.
Sin a tyrant, 305.	Sympathy needed, (Ill.), 107, 111.	Welsh Radical, anecdote of, 83.
Sin causes sorrow, 197.	Sympathy of Jesus, 337.	Wesley, John, anecdote of, 59.
Sin comes little by little, 88.		Whirlwind turned into triumphal chariot, 88, 93.
Sin, the attractiveness of (Ill.), 84, 89.		Whitefield, George, story of, 114.
Solitude a means of grace, 64.	Talents of silver and gold, 117, 132.	Wickedness, weak (Ill.), 73, 84.
Solomon's providential opportunity, 22.	Temperance illustrations, 390.	Wine of Cana, 261.
Sons of the prophets, 90, 100.	Temperance lessons, 147, 238, 321.	Wolsley, anecdote of, 39.
Sorrow, uses of, 193.	Temple repaired, 213.	Woman's influence (Ill.), 80, 84.
Spirit, dispensation of, 253.	Temptations are plausible, 25.	Word made flesh, 243.
Spiritual blessings the gift of God (Ill.), 92, 96.	Tribute labor on public buildings, 23, 24, 32.	Works and faith, 328.
Spiritual reticence, 254.	Turenne, General, story of, 59.	Worldly policy, 40.
		Wrong never right (Ill.), 82, 85, 895

THE END

NOV 3 1921

